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MA THESIS

Theme: Socio-literary analysis of Clyde Griffiths as a protagonist image in Theodore Dreiser's novel "An American Tragedy"

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ABSTRACT
OF THESIS FOR MASTER'S DEGREE

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Socio-literary analysis of Clyde Griffiths as a protagonist image in
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ABSTRACT

“what matter it if a man gaineth the whole world and loseth his own soul?”

Theodore Dreiser “An American Tragedy”.

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) - one of the prominent writers of the USA in the XIX-XX centuries. Dreiser had a great influence in the development of the American literature and left deep traits in the world literature. In the first two decades of the XX century he had defended positions of a critical realism, despite persecution of the press and boycott of publishing houses.

The creativity of Theodore Dreiser was always in the center of attention of critics, there were written many articles about him throughout the world. In particular about Dreiser there wrote: D. Dudley, F. Matisse, A. Keizina, G. Zlobin, N. Samokhvalov and some others.

The novel “An American tragedy” is a peak point in the creativity of Theodore Dreiser. There are quite evidently mentioned the sharp social problems of the American society and convincingly proved that behind a facade of ostentatious bourgeois well-being the grief and despair of many destitute people are concealed.

The purpose of the given thesis work is the research and portrayal of the social and personal characteristics of the protagonist image in the novel of Theodore Dreiser “An American tragedy”.

The given purpose assumes the decision of following theoretical and practical **aims**:

- to define the features of creativity of Theodore Dreiser and the place which he occupies in the world literature;
- to reveal and to analyze the content and the structure of the novel “An American tragedy”;
- to explore a theme of ‘money’ and ‘prosperity’ in the novel “An American tragedy”.

The object of research of the present thesis is Theodore Dreiser’s novel “An American tragedy”.

The subject of the present thesis is a protagonist character of Theodore Dreiser’s novel “An American tragedy” - Clyde Griffiths.

The purposes and aims have caused the structure of the thesis work. It consists of **introduction** (in which the actuality of the present work is proved, its key parameters are defined); **three main chapters** (in chapter I, we observe the American literature on a boundary of XIX- XX centuries, and the creativity of one of its brightest representatives –Theodore Dreiser; in chapter II, there are given plot summary and structure analysis of the novel “An American tragedy”; the chapter III gives us a concrete understanding of such notions as ‘money’ and ‘prosperity’ which are observed in the character of the protagonist in the novel “An American tragedy”); **the conclusion** (in which the basic conclusions are presented) and a list of the **reference literature**.

The practical value of the represented work is that it may serve as a literary source for anybody who studies life and the literary activity of Theodore Dreiser and also be useful in the courses of American literature and can be used as a lecture material.

The theoretical value - the given work can be used as an educational and methodical complex for the course “American literature”, for preparation to seminars, and also to dissertations and to examinations connected with the course of “American literature”.

While making our research we referred to the materials of such authors as Donald Pizer, Horatio Alger Jr., Thorp W., Sherwood Anderson, Zasursky J. N. and many others.

We used also the research articles and lectures of such authors like John Chamberlain on the topic “The Businessman in American Literature” and Emily Watts.

We translated critical interpretations and critical studies on the American writers of such critics as Richard Lehan, Henry Mencken, Nina Baym and William H. Nolte.

Concerning **the method of investigation**, we tried to combine and use such methods as the analytical overview and the analysis of the scientific literature, the method of interpretation, stylistic analysis of the literary text and the methods of generalization and supervision.

In the novel “An American tragedy” there were displayed not only the condition of the American society in the boundary of the XIX-XX centuries, but also its current state partly, since in our days Americans aspire to “the American dream” as well and worship to a dollar cult and these observations define **the actuality** of the given thesis work.

The work consists of **introduction, three main chapters, conclusion and reference literature**.

The introduction gives us brief information about the history of the creation of the novel “An American Tragedy”.

"The American tragedy" (1925) was created, as the novel of Stendhal "Red and black", based on the several lines of the criminal chronicle. At the beginning of the century the American newspapers wrote about murder by a certain Chester Gillette of his pregnant beloved Grace Brown, who appeared to be an obstacle on his way to a favorable marriage. It took place On July 14, 1906 on Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks of New York State.¹ The murderer was arrested and executed.

Dreiser started to work over the novel “An American tragedy” in 1920 and finished it in 1925. The initial text of the book totaling about one million words was reduced in the course of the editing to three hundred eighty five thousand words. The manuscript was reprinted by Helene Dreiser who was not in an official marriage with Dreiser in that period of time and carried a surname of the first husband Richardson. On December, 1925 “An American tragedy” was published by publishing house “Boni and Liveright”.

Firstly, it is necessary to give the definition of the term "tragedy" which is stated in the title of the given literary work “An American Tragedy”. According to the dictionaries we can clarify and sum up that, the tragedy is a dramatic literary work representing an intense struggle, a personal or a public catastrophe and is mainly ended with the death of the hero or the protagonist.

The novel “An American tragedy” corresponds to all the criteria inherent to a real tragedy. In the given literary work we can observe a personal catastrophe or the tragedy of the protagonist which led to his death and from the cases similar to those which were described in the novel, a public tragedy was formed.

Chapter I: Theodore Dreiser and the world literature

The given chapter consists of 2 paragraphs: 1. Literature of the USA in XIX-XX centuries, 2. Theodore Dreiser’s activity in American and world literatures

To the beginning of the XX century the USA became the richest country of the capitalist world. Features of historical development of America, presence of "the free lands" in the West, military deliveries during the World War I were the reasons, owing to which USA became the center

¹ Craig Brandon, Murder in the Adirondacks: An American Tragedy, North Country Books, 1986

of the capitalist world. In the beginning of XX century the literature of decadence dominates in America, the realistic literature is at its forming stage.

The Characteristic feature of the American realists was that, borrowing some formal features of the modernist novel, they kept the aesthetic principles of critical realism: the ability to create types of huge social value, to show deeply typical circumstances of provincial and capital life for the American reality ; the ability to represent the life as an inconsistent process, as a constant struggle and action, unlike the decadent novel which replaced the image of social contradictions with leaving of the hero into a private world or in an area of the consciousness. First half of XX century appeared to be fruitful for development of all directions in the American literature. There were discovered the names of T. Wolfe, U. Falkner, O' Neill, E. Hemingway, F. S. Fitzgerald, D. Steinbeck. Their works strengthened the European popularity and the world authority of the literature of the USA.

The late XIX century in literature was continued by naturalists who displayed more perfect form of realism. American writer Theodore Dreiser demonstrated naturalistic literature in his own manner. He followed his previous expatriates but created something new which was characteristic only to him. He unfolded contents and plots of the stories portrayed characters according to his own ideas and beliefs. All his characters' decisions and actions were led by him, his heroes were completely dependent, and they could not control their own actions.

Theodore Dreiser - romanticist though used a theme of "damnation" of a flesh, of the nature, of a sex, did not act as the passionless observer of a certain "experiment", but as the person obviously sympathizing his characters. There was shown a fact on the base of all his works - the concrete fact, and frequently this fact was borrowed from his private life. Dreiser invariably felt pity for the heroes of his novels; even when they committed a crime, the author shifted fault on a society and on the indifference to the person of the space forces of the nature.

Among his most known books we can name novels "Jennie Gerhardt" (1911); "The Financier" (1912), "The Titan" (1914) and posthumously published "The Stoic" (1947), made the so-called "desire trilogy"; well-known "An American tragedy" (1925). Throughout all his life Dreiser did not cease to write publicist novels like "Dreiser looks at Russia", 1928.

The creativity of Dreiser had cleared the way for following generation of the American writers. In many respects, thanks to Dreiser, that we learned not only Sinclair Lewis, but also Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway.

Dreiser was an artist-naturalist. He built his literary works on an enormous material of supervision and experience. His art was an art of the exact image to scrupulousness, the art of the facts and things. Dreiser depicted a life in all the smallest details, he added the documents sometimes almost entirely taken from the reality (letters of Roberta Alden in "An American tragedy" were taken almost entirely), quoted the press, largely explained stock market speculations of the heroes, attentively followed the development of their business enterprises etc. The American critics repeatedly accused Dreiser of the absence of style, without understanding the special nature of his naturalistic style.

Chapter II: Socio-literary analyses of "An American Tragedy" by Theodore Dreiser

The given chapter consists of 3 paragraphs: 1. Plot summary and structural analyses of "An American Tragedy", 2. Thematic stylistic models of description in the novel, 3. A character analysis: Clyde and Clyde's love story.

"An American Tragedy" was a top of the creativity of the American writer Theodore Dreiser. There were more profoundly embodied, the talent of the artist, of the humanist who laid the new ways both in literature, and in life. The center of the novel is the history of an ordinary American of Clyde Griffiths, the son of poor parents. Clyde was an embodiment of commonness, and in this sense he was also typical. Illusions and the dreams, imparted to him in the childhood, defined also the further destiny of the young man captured by insuperable desire to achieve an easy life by all means.

In "An American Tragedy" there was reached that surprising artistic integrity which distinguished truthful and realistic works of art. Both the novel title, and its composition, both a landscape, and author's deviations, and logic of the development of characters, and their psychology in "An American Tragedy" reveal the responsibility of the American bourgeois society over the tragedy of Clyde Griffiths.

The tragedy of Clyde consisted of not only of a commitment of a crime, but also of how he was judged. The destiny of Clyde was predetermined long before the court beginning. He had become a toy in a pre-election struggle of the two bourgeois parties. Briability of the American justice, its partiality, and adherence to the interests of small groups personified the images of public prosecutor Mr. Mason, inspector Mr. Heit and of the numerous lawyers. The theme of the money

which had become persuasive even today, occupied the main place in "An American tragedy". Money defined the destinies of the heroes.

Dreiser underlined and emphasized the social character of the novel: "It was an exclusively true story about what life does with the person and how the person is powerless against it".²

"An American tragedy" developed and improved those deep humanistic feelings and thoughts by which the previous novels of Dreiser were touched. There were realistic landscapes, symbols and comparisons of the writer in the novel. The book began and came to an end with the scene of the twilights. Dreiser had often used an internal monologue, especially for reproduction of a distraught condition of the spirit of Clyde.

"An American tragedy" became a banner of a critical realism in the American literature of the twentieth century. It had defined a basic path and highway of the further development of the American literature. "An American tragedy" was rightly included into the golden fund of the world literature.

The style of Dreiser was influenced by his journalistic career. Each setting in the novel was full of description and details. Reading a novel we felt in the most passages the mood of reportage, which came from his background of a reporter.

Clyde Griffiths- was a young fellow who was grown up poor but believed that someday he would free himself from his family and would enter the higher society. It was awful to him to be born in a poor family. He could not accept that he his siblings asked for donations singing religious songs, helping their parents to do the God's work in Kansas City. Clyde Griffiths, the young man from a poor large family of the street preachers, he was not alien to the feelings of vanity, pride, but he was deprived of formation, practice and energy, having got some - rather doubtful - life experience working the in the Kansas City Hotel. In Lycurgus he got a job at the factory of his rich relative. There he got acquainted with Roberta Alden, the lovely modest girl. Soon the possibility to enter the world of the owners of Lycurgus was represented to him. The daughter of one of the rich men, Sondra Finchley felt sympathy to Clyde. By that time Clyde learned that Roberta waited for the child from him. Clyde had an intention to dispose of her; he thought over the plan of murder and invited Roberta to boat walk where she died. Clyde was not very cruel or very brave to kill her; the case had helped him in this. The fault for the death of the girl was assigned to him, and he ended his

² Frohock, W.M. Theodore Dreiser. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972, University of Minnesota

life on an electric chair, such was the end of the person who had believed in a myth of "equal possibilities".

Such a concept as love was the link of the novel that united all the heroes. Dreiser indicated the love for God, the love of Clyde to his parents, girls etc. in the novel. There were believed to be the various displays of love expressed, accordingly, differently in the novel. Quite often under the word of love, instead of a deep and sincere feeling the author meant the passion only, not realized inclination. In the given paragraph of our thesis we tried to analyze how and with the help of which expressions there were shown the feelings of Clyde Griffiths to the girls.

Chapter III: The crash of “An American dream” in the novel of “An American Tragedy”

The given chapter consists of 3 paragraphs: 1. The notion of “money” and “prosperity” in the novel “An American Tragedy”, 2. Interrelation of crime & punishment as depictive features of the novel.

One of the key concepts of the novel was the concept of money. It was one of the most often used notions throughout the whole novel. Each of the heroes had his own the relation to money, and own way of the achievement of a well-being. Within the limits of our thesis it was not obviously possible to analyze the position of all the heroes to money, therefore we tried to survey the relation of the protagonist, Clyde Griffiths, who had almost fully characterized the point of view of the author and allowed us to reveal an image of the author.

He was eager to gain wealth, high social status, luxurious life and general respect that he might not realize that he had broken all the moral rules of life. Money made him! And finally he had lost everything! He could not become rich; he had lost his freedom, his family, and his love and even his life. All his thoughts, all his desires and beliefs were crashed. He might not realize it all, because all his attempts, all his actions, behaviors, plans were incorrect. He had forgotten about moral rules and that was his fiasco.

The conclusion: Thus, we had clarified that money for the protagonist was the sense of all his life, the unique means of the achievement of success in decent society: “money for clothes”, “money for beautiful homes”, “money for cars”. The author focused our attention on that the aspiration to have money and to live in a beautiful life had closed all the other feelings and human qualities of the hero. Even choosing between the two nice girls he liked, Clyde had chosen Sondra

Finchley, the girl from the society with a high material well-being. On an example of the protagonist of the novel, the author gave the readers the reason to think over all. On an example of Clyde Griffiths the author showed a negative influence of money on a simple man of the middle class.

The culmination moment in the novel was the crime made by Clyde in the relation to Roberta. The thought of murder came to Clyde's mind casually. Having read in the newspaper about the murder which had occurred on one of the lakes, he imagined himself in a similar situation. It was extremely necessary for him to dispose of Roberta as soon as possible because she hindered him in his mutual relations with Sondra, and represented a direct threat to his future, which was seen to him very light and happy.

Clyde could not assume that the crime committed by him would be solved and that his fault would be proved, and that this act would be decisive in his life. The fault of Clyde had been completely proved, the condemnation was severe: the death penalty through an electric chair. Trying to provide himself a bright and happy future with Sondra, by the death Roberta, the girl who loved him, Clyde directed and led his life to such a tragic ending.

Finally, making some generalizations, it was possible to come to a conclusion that on an example of the protagonist the author showed a negative influence of money to a man. Money could replace so many things to a man; could even replace true feelings and true love. All these had inevitably led to the tragic ending, reflecting the original American tragedy which Dreiser tried to explain to his readers. The society, the people, the events in the novel reflected the problems which would continue to exist even nowadays. Rich people would solve their problems with the help of their money and good social connections while poor people would suffer from the injustice of the world. The book portrayed how the obsessive idea of becoming rich could destroy a human soul.

People, stop feeding yourselves that money, society, luxury and a social status can make you happy! Otherwise, you will be disappointed. There is always something more and better ...

INTRODUCTION

"The American tragedy" (1925) was created, as the novel of Stendhal "Red and black", based on the several lines of the criminal chronicle. At the beginning of the century the American newspapers wrote about murder by a certain Chester Gillette of his pregnant beloved Grace Brown, who appeared to be an obstacle on his way to a favorable marriage. It took place On July 14, 1906 on Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks of New York State.³ The murderer was arrested and executed. From time to time, the "Sensations" and dramatic stories of such kind appeared in press. Dreiser, himself, working as the reporter in Sent – Luis, was very affected by this criminal case and described a similar history. Since that time he began to collect cuttings on this topic from the newspapers. He began to develop the plot of his novel twice. Dreiser did not hide the similarity of the story his hero, Clyde Griffiths with that of Chester Gillette, even the initials of these men were the same C.G.

Dreiser started to work over the novel "An American tragedy" in 1920 and finished it in 1925. The initial text of the book totaling about one million words was reduced in the course of the editing to three hundred eighty five thousand words. The manuscript was reprinted by Helene Dreiser who was not in an official marriage with Dreiser in that period of time and carried a surname of the first husband Richardson. On December, 1925 "An American tragedy" was published by publishing house "Boni and Liveright". Russian reader's got acquainted with the novel in the translation of Z. Veshinina and N. Gaal, the best translation in Azerbaijani made by A. Mammedkhanli, under the publication of Baku publishing house in 1952. In 2005, in the opera Metropolitan, T. Picker represented to the audience the opera, created on the motives of the novel "An American Tragedy".

One of the major components of the text is its title. Being out of the basic part of the text, it takes an absolutely strong position in it. It is the first sign of the literary work with which the acquaintance to the text begins. The title activates the perception of the reader and directs the reader's attention to that what will be stated further.

Firstly, it is necessary to give the definition of the term "tragedy" which is stated in the title of the given literary work "An American Tragedy". According to the dictionaries we can clarify and sum up that, the tragedy is a dramatic literary work representing an intense struggle, a personal or a public catastrophe and is manly ended with the death of the hero or the protagonist.

³ Craig Brandon, Murder in the Adirondacks: An American Tragedy, North Country Books, 1986, p.10

The ‘tragedy’ is a big form of the dramatic work, which is contrasted to comedy. It is characterized by the inevitable dramatic fight and by the necessary death of the tragic personage. Tragedy is also differentiated by the special character of the drama conflict.⁴ The basis of the tragedy can’t be a simple fight of the personality against obstacles, but a deep ideological conflict, collision of outlooks. Term ‘tragedy’ appears for the first time in Ancient Greece for designation of religious ceremony — traditional mimic games and the choral songs (dithyrambs) connected with agrarian festivals in honor of god Dionysus. Sacrifice of a goat was a ritual basis of these festivals (in Greek *tragos*, from where arose the name "tragedy", "goat song", "a song in honor of a goat"), accompanied by performance of the legend on Dionysus.⁵ This legend was narrated by the priest to the people in an extreme antiquity, later it passed to dithyrambic chorus, along which the “dancing choruses of satyrs” participated in a ceremony, reproducing events of the same legend on Dionysus in mimics. Under investigation of Aristotle, we can say that ‘tragedy’ came from a combination of a dithyramb with chorus of satyrs and at early steps of its development kept close connection with the myth about Dionysus.

Tragedy portrayed the recession of an honorable hero or heroine, mostly through some appointment of destiny or fatality, and the volition of the gods. The highest desire of the tragic protagonist, to attain the goal, necessarily faces limits. From the point of view of Aristotle, the image, which is tragic, should possess some guilt or mistake.⁶ It is not necessary to pass away in the conclusion part of the work. Generally, we can never imagine the tragedy sans an unfortunate closure unlike the Greeks, who could. For instance, in the literary work *Philoctetes* by Sophocles, we do not observe an unfortunate closure. Basically, there are some similarities between an antique Greek tragedy and a modern one. For example, the main character and some definite secondary characters are captured in a troublesome context or situation.

Thus, it becomes clear that the novel “An American tragedy” corresponds to all the criteria inherent to a real tragedy. In the given literary work we can observe a personal catastrophe or the tragedy of the protagonist which led to his death and from the cases similar to those which were

⁴ Ley Graham, *The Ancient Greek Theater*, Chicago, 1959, p.25

⁵ Aristotle, *The Poetics*, London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1963, p.112

⁶ Ibid

described in the novel, a public tragedy was formed. But within the limits of our thesis, we need to define what the author meant by the American tragedy.

Chapter I: Theodore Dreiser and the world literature

§1 Literature of the USA in XIX-XX centuries

To the beginning of the XX century the USA became the richest country of the capitalist world. Features of historical development of America, presence of "the free lands" in the West, military deliveries during the World War I were the reasons, owing to which USA became the center of the capitalist world.

In the beginning of XX century the literature of decadence dominates in America, the realistic literature is at its forming stage.

Dreiser considered that romanticism of a profit is strong in a society, there is a prevailing confidence that the existing system is the best, Hollywood holds the preference not only in cinematography, but also in literature. Nobody ever works in the American literature, there is no poverty, and difficulties are resolved by means of different intrigues. In a number of large magazines ("Success", "the American magazine", "Saturday mail") there becomes famous the American way of life, private business, "America - the country of equal possibilities for all".

The large spread of the political adventurous novel the hero of which is the enterprising businessman, the diplomat, and the scout was observed in the literature of XX century and in some cases this novel was transformed into the detective-espionage story for which it was characteristic the anti-Soviet orientation.

Decadent art was supported by the representatives of "the Boston school" which was headed by the editions of many popular newspapers and magazines; they propagandized "a pure art". Nevertheless, a realistic literature also existed in the creativity of Mark Twain, Sinclair, J. London, etc.

The USA declared about their joining the World War I in April, 1917, and had accepted the participation in the military operations some months before the armistice signing. America did not fight in the native the territory, but its literature could not pass away the term of "the lost generation". The problems connected with war, pathos of war, its heroes were included not only into the books of those writers which were at war on fronts of Europe as Hemingway, but also had influenced a wide range of writers and their works, had intertwined with other problems specific to

America, with the theme of a big money in the America of twenties and the crash of an American dream.

The War had caused bitterness and anger, had helped to see clearly the true essence and value of things, of lie and of artificiality of the official slogans.

The economic crisis of twenties-thirties had pulled together all the contradictions in the united knot, having aggravated the social conflicts, in the South and the West. There were ruined farms in the mass form, in the North and the Northeast on mines and factories fierce social collisions were developed.

Theodore Dreiser wrote about disasters of miners of Garland, Steinbeck retold to the whole world about the tragedy of the farmers of California and of the Far West.

Rough thirties find their most truthful and deep reflection in the creativity of E. Hemingway, J. Steinbeck, A. Miller, G. Fitzgerald and others.

The Characteristic feature of the American realists was that, borrowing some formal features of the modernist novel, they kept the aesthetic principles of critical realism: the ability to create types of huge social value, to show deeply typical circumstances of provincial and capital life for the American reality ; the ability to represent the life as an inconsistent process, as a constant struggle and action, unlike the decadent novel which replaced the image of social contradictions with leaving of the hero into a private world or in an area of the consciousness.

Masters of the American prose deliberately refused a difficult technique of richly developed sharp and entertaining plot of the novel of the XIX centuries, in their opinion, a simple plot deprived of the elements of entertainment, could better underline the tragic state of the protagonist. They considered that in the XX century the aesthetics of reading should become more intense, than it was in the last century, therefore they did not aspire, as their predecessors, to inform all the significant and important about their heroes in an exposition. The additional effort was required from the reader to acquire and to comprehend the components of a complex composition of the novel.

First half of XX century appeared to be fruitful for development of all directions in the American literature. There were discovered the names of T. Wolfe, U. Falkner, O' Neill, E. Hemingway, F. S. Fitzgerald, D. Steinbeck. Their works strengthened the European popularity and the world authority of the literature of the USA.

American writers were tired to form a literature that was completely national. Consequently, there appeared four outstanding writers of that period: I. Washington, J. Cooper, W. Bryant and E. Poe. All these writers influenced a literary development of that period of time. The poem "Thanatopsis" is among Bryant's famous works, his poetry was lyrical in general and represented the image of New England. I. Washington and J. Cooper were among those American writers who got respect and love of British critics. Edgar Allan Poe wrote analytical literary works or rather editorial. His literary activity was based on writing of critical essays, tales, detective stories and poems. He was popular in France, his works were translated there. "The Raven"- is his masterpiece poem which brought him success.

The names of J. Kennedy and W. Simms can also be called among the outstanding novelists of the early XIX century in the South America. Kennedy mostly wrote about the work and life on the plantations (Swallow Barn, 1832), Simms literary activity was based on historical novels, Revolutionary romances about his native land South Carolina, about frontier etc.

The American literary representatives between 1830 and 1867 can be called as humoristic writers of the American Renaissance. The most prominent of them were James Russell, Benjamin Shillaber and Seba Smith.

Other great American fiction writers of this period were Herman Melville (Moby Dick), Whitman (Leaves of Grass, 1855) and N. Hawthorne (Scarlet letter, 1850). Hawthorne's literature was mainly directed against colonial America, bearing in itself some psychological and ethical moments. Melville's writings were rather philosophical, political and allegoric (Mardi, 1849). He tried to comment on the important topics which worried the society of that period in his short stories. Whitman tried to be more optimistic, avoiding the description of problems and created works full of ambitions, ideas, concepts, beliefs, feelings of a common man. American individualism was his main inspiration and he was the follower of the Jacksonian democracy. Whitman can be regarded as one of the famous poets of America of the XIX century.

The Civil War was the turning moment of the American society and of the literature as well. The development and improvement was noticed at least in every sphere: economic, agrarian, industrial and cultural. Literary comedians appeared. The style of their writing, their grammar was very poor, the spelling was bad from the literary point of view, but since their works were addressed to an ordinary national audience, this fact was of less importance. Respectively the most of the

Americans of that period found these authors very comic. We can name some of them: Edgar Nye, Josh Billings, Artemus Ward and others.

American fiction writers were followed by local colorists who wrote humoristic short stories having national character (about the life in mining camp of California and the lifestyles in different states). There are names of some local colorists of that period: Bret Harte, Edward Eggleston, O' Henry etc. The content of their work was realistic, sentimental and humoristic.

Mark Twain having used the previous experience of literary comedians and local colorists became more popular. His works were known and liked by the large audience of readers. He mostly wrote adventurous and travel stories showing both comic and tragic aspects of life ("The adventures of Tom Sawyer", 1876, "The adventures of Mississippi", 1883, "The adventures of Huckleberry Finn", 1884). He had a deep humor hidden in his works. The new realistic type of literature was followed by William Howells, who also was a fiction writer and preferred to comment on politics, society and economics in his realistic novels but with a sense of humor avoiding tragic elements. Some of his best works are: "A modern instance", 1882, "Their wedding journey", 1872 and "The rise of Silas Lapham", 1885.

The late XIX century in literature was continued by naturalists who displayed more perfect form of realism. This movement also assumed writing of short stories, novels with some philosophical and social explanations in a more detailed form. The best example of such kind of literature was "Crumbling Idols", 1894 by Hamlin Garland.⁷

American writer Theodore Dreiser demonstrated naturalistic literature in his own manner. He followed his previous expatriates but created something new which was characteristic only to him. He unfolded contents and plots of the stories portrayed characters according to his own ideas and beliefs. All his characters' decisions and actions were led by him, his heroes were completely dependent, and they could not control their own actions. Appealing to the statement that "race to the swift and the battle to the strong" Dreiser showed his characters failed and broken by more powerful adversaries. Dreiser's famous works: "The Financier", "Sister Carrie", "An American Tragedy", "The Titan" were written between 1900-1925 years.

⁷ The literature of XIXth century, www.britannica.com

John Read's activity, especially the edition of his book in 1919 "Ten days that shook the world" got a big resonance. This book had brought to America live breath of revolution in Russia. The prestige of the Workers' and Peasants' state had been extraordinarily increased after 1929 when as a result of crash at the New York stock exchange in America there came "a great depression" and there were demonstrations of the unemployed people on which the army opened fire on the streets. In that period in the USA there were written more than 100 thousand requests to move to Russia.

The thirties were included into the history of America as "a red thirties". By the sharpness of the social, political and the economic crisis they have no analogy in the whole two hundred year's history of the USA. And though "a great depression" had been officially overcome in 1933, its presence in literature went beyond the marked limits. The experience of those difficult years forever remained in Americans as the immunity against complacency, carelessness and sincere indifference.⁸

It had been laid down on the basis of the further development of a national formula of success, there was promoted the strengthening of a moral basis of the American business. This experience gave "the second breath" to the school of the critical realists conducting the tradition from the former times – dirty thirties. On a new material of the literature writers began to investigate carefully the American tragedy, having deep roots in a national consciousness.

The theme of an American dream and an American tragedy logically involved the occurrence of the problem of a pathological praise by patriots of the whole American and of the sense of fear and depression of the inhabitants of small towns, compelled to bear in them the burden of "a healthy Americanism".

An American ideology can be described as being successful and prosperous, that is "an American dream". "An American dream" is rather many-sided postulate, but one of its components is a material success.

The utilitarian component of the American dream was very close to Protestant ideology, and had found its reflection in Benjamin Franklin's work "Autobiography". In "autobiography" Franklin fully expressed the American pragmatism when he had put an engineer and a teacher above all the poets and Raphael's creations. Franklin had highly appreciated and uplifted the spirit of business and creation of material values and technical invention.

⁸ William H. Hull. "The Dirty Thirties", 1989, p.32

In the artistic form the theme of material realization of the American dream had its continuation in "the novels of success" of Horatio Alger. He was a bright representative of the apologetic literature, who speculated with democratic slogans and sang of bourgeois America. Being born in a rather well-founded family, firstly he was a priest, who refused service to God for the sake of literary career, in 1867 in a simple and an interesting form he wrote about purpose achievement by a simple persistent American for which there were no barriers in life. Works of Horatio Alger played a very important role in the education of a growing generation of youth, by imparting a self-confidence, a belief to own forces and an achievement of material education. According to the critic K. Linn "the whole generations of American children were brought up on Alger".

Horatio Alger came from a rather rich family, studied as the priest in Paris, after returning to Paris, became a clergyman, but soon renounced service to God in the favor of literary glory. In 1867 he published the book "Ragged Dick" which had a wide popularity among the readers. Protagonist Dick - Horatio Alger was a homeless child who conducted a dissolute way of life, on a course of life met Mr. Whitney who told him: "I hope, my lad, you will prosper and rise in the world. You know in this free country poverty in early life is no bar to a man's advancement. I haven't risen very high myself," he added, with a smile, "but have met with moderate success in life; yet there was a time when I was as poor as you."⁹

This is a truly cheap history of how a homeless guy becomes a rich man, the person who "goes from zero to hero". The most important thing was that Horatio Alger had created the image of the American, who aspired to the richness from the poverty.

The first half of XX century appeared to be fruitful for the development of all the directions in the American literature, revealed the names of E. Hemingway, F.S. Fitzgerald. Their works strengthened the European popularity and the world authority of the literature of the USA.

A large spread in the literature of 10th years of XX century there received a political adventurous novel, the hero of which was the enterprising businessman, the diplomat, the scout. In a number of cases this novel was transformed into the detective-espionage story with an anti-Soviet orientation.

Thus, we can assert that from the very beginning the American literature preached and propagandized the spirit of capitalism: enterprise, strength of mind in the achievement of goal, a

⁹ Horatio Alger Jr., "Ragged Dick", 1868, p.110

pragmatic view to the nature and to the essence of the things, the superiority of the American efficiency over the European philosophy.

Certainly, American writers for a very long period of time did not think about business as an opportunity to make a profit. Herman Melville in "Moby Dick" described a whaling vessel as "a factory" for killing and processing of whales, and greed, undoubtedly, was the motive in financing of "voyages" of whaling vessel. However, Melville was anxious only about utilitarian issues of proprietors of the vessel of whales. That question which was really interesting to him was a metaphysical mania of Captain Ahab. Melville together with Toro, Emerson worried more about questions connected with Good and Evil in the world, where Sam Slick, Johnson Hooper –his negative and mean hero saw a pragmatism: "It is good - to be dishonest in a new country".

The authorship at the times of preindustrial epoch was connected with an aristocratic protection, and the writer in America had been faced to cope with a situation simply, because there were no noble lords in a new society to pay to scribblers. Mark Twain, Henry James and William Din Howells, "a big three" had made everything that they could, with an insensible world after the times of Civil War. Twain was the tramp-writer; Howells began his literary activity with getting and finding the information about Abraham Lincoln's biography in an illegal way which conducted political cases as the consul. Twain had fun over business villains in "the Gilded Age", but he personally was delighted with inventors and resource of the Yankee, with the genius of the mechanic of Connecticut which had visited a court yard of King Arthur.

Henry James was the writer who wrote as a philosopher, and his brother William –a philosopher, wrote as a writer, and did not hate business as it was. He only regretted that he left to the American Christopher Newman (1877) not enough time for culture.

For Howells, his ethical concern had led to the insignificant talks about socialism of style of Edward Bellamy (1850-1898). Bellamy was a socialist representative of the American Literature known for his utopian work named "Looking Backward". The only thing that disturbed Howells was his business with the millionaires who had lost the magnanimous instincts in a pursuit of success. The fact that Howells tried to avoid was that those millionaires represented both utilitarian and aesthetic means that justified the business that had generated it, and that Henry James avoided was the circumstance that Christopher Newman first earned money that had allowed him to accept a cultural Year of wanderings in the Europe.

Emily Watts, with her ability to hear nuances, respected Gertrude Stein, the instructor of Ernest Hemingway, with the most essential protection of private capitalism in the mid-thirties. In the letter to "the Evening Post", Ms. Stein asked a simple question, -"when do you have money and when you have not?" - "When you earn money and spend it." - She answered; " anybody can notice a difference between one million and three. But when you squander money there is no difference among one million and three".¹⁰

Emily Watts is a dexterous researcher and may excellently sum up the results, but she has neglected some moments. She attributes to Will Katter anti-business on the basis of Katter's stories but he, Fred Ottenburg, was the businessman who had reached opera career by the "The Song of the Lark". And someone will vainly look at the book of Emily Watts addressed to Garret Garrett who, in addition to his pure economic writing, gave us several remarkable novels about business. Garret - the Driver, the Novel was based on life E. N. Harriman of the Pacific union, undoubtedly, had a reflection of the importance of richness.

Bourgeois literary critics demanded from writers the praise of capitalist America. In the magazine "Fortune" in 1948 the similar policy was put forward by the critic of the American literature John Chamberlain. In the article "The Businessman in the Literature" he asserted that "an American novelist considered him as a disgusting being, and complained that "the images of businessmen - continuous stamps" and that they were belittled. Besides, Chamberlain demanded, that in novels about businessmen there should be "a prospect which would show a comparative honesty of the majority of businessmen".¹¹ He urged to create a positive and an attractive image of a businessman.

Looking through the history of the American literature in the USA in 1885 – 1948 years, Chamberlain named the literature of a critical realism like a socialist literature, he considered that since the times of Twain there were existed two traditions different from each other, irreconcilably hostile to "trade" and "bourgeoisie". The first was in close connection with an aristocratic point of view; it could be found in novels of Edith Wharton, and also in Henry James's works looking very simple at the American businessman from the sight of the writer. The second tendency was the tradition of a literary socialism. It was strange, but the second antibourgeois tendency involved

¹⁰ John Chamberlain, A Reviewers Notebook: The Businessman in American Literature, March 01, 1983

¹¹ Ibid

many supporters and adherents of the first, for example, it appeared in the late works of Howells and then reached a huge blossoming in books of proletarian writers of 30th years. Trying to develop his point of view, John Chamberlain made the following conclusion that “a scornful tone” in which businessmen was spoken about originated from the literary socialists.¹²

Falling upon writers of critical realism, John frankly stated the political credo of the reactionary, acting in a role of the enemy of democratic and socialist ideas, the defender of the American bourgeoisie. He opened a campaign of reactionary critics for creation of the literature glorifying the American capitalist.

The literature XX century could be studied in the creativity of E. Hemingway, U. Faulkner, J. Steinbeck, A. Miller, and S. Fitzgerald.

A Characteristic feature of the American realists was that, borrowing some formal features of the modernist novel, they kept aesthetic principles of critical realism: the ability to create types of huge social value to show deeply typical circumstances of provincial and capital life for the American reality; the ability to represent life as an inconsistent process, as a constant struggle and action, unlike the decadent novel which replaced the image of social contradictions with leaving of the hero into a private world, in area of the sub consciousness.

Masters of the American prose deliberately refused a difficult technique of a richly developed, sharp and entertaining plot of the novel of XX century, in their opinion, a simple plot deprived of the elements of entertainment, could better underline a tragic element of the position of the protagonist. They considered that in the XX century the reading aesthetics should become more intense, than it was in the previous century, therefore they did not aspire, like their predecessors, to inform all the main about their heroes in an exposition; the additional effort was required from the reader to acquire and comprehend the components of a complex composition of the novel.

The thirties were included into the history of America as “the red the thirties”. The experience of those difficult years for ever remained in Americans as the immunity against complacency, carelessness and sincere indifference.

It had laid down into a basis of the further development of the national formula of success, promoted the strengthening of a moral basis of the American business. This experience gave “the

¹² Zasursky J. N., American literature of the XX century (2nd edition, revised), Moscow University Press, 1984, p. 504

second breath” to the school of the critical realists conducting tradition from “the dirt cleaners”. On a new material of the literature they began to investigate carefully the American tragedy having deep roots in national consciousness.

In the beginning of the XX century in America there were allocated two approaches to the consideration of a question of who were such representatives of elite. One divided the point of view that establishment was a basis of the American society, the others, on the contrary, considered that representatives of the establishment - thieves, robbers, exploiters.

The American literature reflected the conflicts generated by a society of state-monopoly capitalism in the sphere of the development of the industry, the industry, a social system. The conflict decision was a considerable achievement of the writers which reflected the aversion of the injurious world destroying the nature, in their works. These writers were: Dreiser, Hemingway and Steinbeck who continued the tradition close to Tolstoy.

The XX century in the American literature was combined, dramatic and rich. The literature of the USA is younger than other western literatures – its history is about four centuries if to keep count since then when the first colonists settled in the North America, and about two hundred years if to begin calculation from the first literary preconditions of war for independence or from the creation of the United States of America. The main feature of the American literature was an influence of the socialist ideas on the writers-democrats that promoted the success of a realistic direction.

The study of the creativity of bright representatives of the literature of the USA of the XX century helps to see the common features of a literary process that have provided launch to the American literary process.

In the XX century the American literature endured a prompt lifting connected, first of all, with blossoming of the realistic art of 20th -30th years. At that time there printed their works such classics of the world as Th. Dreiser, E. Sinclair, E Hemingway, Sh. Anderson and the other social conditions of the development of the country performance promoted writers with a critical revaluation of the bourgeois values.

Writers-realists clearly realized what was covered behind a sparkling facade of the richest country of the world. A bright explanation of it there was a symbolical name of the biggest novel of Theodore Dreiser- "the American tragedy". Internal tragic element there also existed in the literature

of the American writers of "the lost generation". In the literary works that revealed this theme, there was reflected a realistic accuracy in the description of the destiny of the generation, whose youth had passed in the years of war.

Despite it, in the literature there was observed the method of the socialist realism in the works D. Reed, Th. Dreiser and some others. In the XX century the American poetry and prose had put forward such important themes as a working class position, a racial discrimination, a social struggle, an imperialistic war, the danger of fascism and some other topics. A considerable influence on the development of the literature there had the progressive magazines as "Liberator", "Worker's monthly" etc.

Simultaneously incomprehensibility of the liberally adjusted intelligence in the face of the social cataclysms of the century took some writers into the deadlock of modernism and avant-gardism. Powerful influence on development of modernist directions had the idealistic concepts that trying to return the lost positions in the field of ideology, the American bourgeoisie used mass media for advertising of modernist works and in every possible way kept the development of the actually entertaining literature. Therefore in the late twenties there was a blossoming of "the popular literature "the center of which Hollywood had become.

The literature of the USA had passed some stages of the development till 1945. In the 20th years in the works of progressive writers an important place there occupied the themes of the social protest and of "the lost generation ". The World economic crisis which was developing in 1929, led to the occurrence of new tendencies in the literature. Literary and publicist activity of writers of socialist orientation was stirred up. There appeared the works of "cruel realism" and antifascist struggle of progressive and aggressive writers became stronger.

As a whole the development of the American literature of first half of the XX century was characterized by domination of a realistic method of the image of the presence and reality.

A traditional plot of the American literature of the XVII-XIX of centuries was the prosecution of any vital purpose by the person (a survival, achievement of a social recognition, self-improvement etc.), struggle against the forces of the nature or against bad social conditions and victory at the end. Young writers-naturalists replaced a traditional image of the hero with a tiny figure in a determinist system which floutingly ignored him; the process of evolution was absolutely indifferent to the human's personality and consequently a human life came to the end with tragedy

for instance, "The Open Boat" (1899) and "Maggi: A girl of the streets" (1893) of Stephen Crane, "Vandover and the brute" (1898) of Frank Norris, "Martin Eden" (1909) of Jack London etc.

Naturalism in America had a special and a greater value rather than in Europe: it was the most adequate way of the reflection of inevitable and unclear material processes which changed the nation evidently. Two decades the naturalism in its various versions dominated in the American literature, until the European modernism came and formed a powerful opposition to it.

§2 Theodore Dreiser's activity in American and world literatures

A key figure of the American naturalism is Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945). The originality of naturalism in the USA, and the evolution of naturalistic prose from XIX to the XX century were fully reflected in his creativity.

Being the youngest of all the American naturalists (except Jack London), Dreiser came to the literature when the most considerable naturalistic literary works had already been published: the book of stories of Hamlin Garland "Main - travelled road" (1891), "Maggi: A girl of the streets" (1893), "The Red Badge of Courage" (1895) and "The Open Boat" (1899) of Stephen Crane etc. Dreiser developed the main principles of their creativity in the characteristic way.

In all his novels there is an idea of "a local color", or "veritism", stated by Hamlin Garland in the essay collection "Crumbling Idols" (1894). Dreiser responded to Frank Norris's appeal, the author of a collection of critical articles and essays "The Responsibilities of the novelist" (1903), on an example of a concrete human life to study "a join of forces of the nature, of social tendencies and of racial impulses".

Dreiser and the other writers-naturalists of his generation and of the generation coming after him which in the USA, verified the creativity with artistic experience of the European adherents of "a natural school" (Zola, Gissing, Moore, etc.), and also neo-romanticists (Stevenson, Kipling) that made it possible to mix in their literary works the interest to positivism, the ideas and the social problematics.

Theodore Dreiser - romanticist though used a theme of "damnation" of a flesh, of the nature, of a sex, did not act as the passionless observer of a certain "experiment", but as the person obviously sympathizing his characters. There was shown a fact on the base of all his works - the concrete fact, and frequently this fact was borrowed from his private life. Dreiser invariably felt pity for the heroes of his novels; even when they committed a crime, the author shifted fault on a society and on the indifference to the person of the space forces of the nature.

Being born in a small river town of Terre Haute, Indiana State, the twelfth child of thirteen children of a fanatically religious and often jobless German-immigrant, Theodore Herman Albert Dreiser was familiar with a lack of money and isolation since his childhood. From fifteen years he had been compelled to combine study at school with a low-paid work of the handyman (the washerman in cafe, the messenger of linen in a laundry etc.) in Terre Haute and in the district. After

finishing the school, Dreiser had entered the University of Indiana in the city of Bloomington, with a help of the money given him by his teacher but a year later left it and entered the world of journalism as well as many beginner American writers before and after Dreiser.

He co-operated with many newspapers the Midwest cities, and in 1892 worked in "Chicago Daily Globe" which embodied both naturalistic principles of the struggle for existence and a survival of the strongest.

Chicago stimulated Dreiser's imagination enthusiastically concerning the American urbanism and poeticizing industry and the activity of steelmaking magnates. Dreiser strengthened his labor and journalistic "universities" with reading of the books closest to him: Lev Tolstoy, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spenser. Since 1897 Dreiser had entirely devoted himself to literary activity.

Chicago was not an only city where he derived inspiration: Dreiser was the wanderer by his nature and according to his beliefs. He lived (without having a constant house anywhere) in Saint Louis, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and New York.

The urbanism and the progress were paradoxically combined in Dreiser's activity with a tragic relation to life. He considered that on the base of the world there was a blind vital energy which casually reflected in the actions, kind or malicious - as it was necessary, and only the art and creative activity could be compared with "an incentive force of love". It was not evident that several works of Dreiser were devoted to the people of art: "Sister Carrie" (1900), "The Genius" (1915), "Dawn" (1931).

Among his most known books we can name novels "Jennie Gerhardt" (1911); "The Financier" (1912), "The Titan" (1914) and posthumously published "The Stoic" (1947), made the so-called "desire trilogy"; well-known "An American tragedy" (1925). Throughout all his life Dreiser did not cease to write publicist novels like "Dreiser looks at Russia", 1928.

In the last years of life he was especially interested in a policy. It was symptomatic that Dreiser simultaneously joined the ranks of communist party of the USA and became a member of Quaker community. He was a naive thinker, and his political predilections were indistinct. But as the writer, all his life writing about a motive power of desire and inevitability of defeat, Dreiser had in many respects defined a tonality of the American prose of the XX century.

The best traditions of the American literature of the nineteenth century were developed in the literary works of Theodore Dreiser - traditions of romanticists such as F. Cooper, Herman Melville, David Toro and Harriett Bicher Stou. So the known critic and writer Zasursky (1984) wrote about a role of Dreiser in the American literature. The acute aversion of the world of business made Dreiser close to Cooper with whom he could be also compared with for a detailed, slow manner of narration. Dreiser was sharply opposed against Puritanism and hypocrisy, against money-making practice and self-love, basically, those features of Americans which had formed that America that we could see then. Especially close to him there was an irreconcilable fighter against slavery- Henry David Toro. Passionate pathos of accusation of social injustice, division of the world into the poor and rich pulls Dreiser together with abolitionists. At the height of the antifascist publicist activity in the thirties, Dreiser had even published a book of the selected works of this author and the philosopher "Toro's live thoughts" to which he had written a warm pathetic preface. First Dreiser is known to us as a sharp critic of the century, who continued also the traditions put by Mark Twain and Walt Whitman.¹³

According to many researchers, development of the American literature in the nineteenth century did not differ by a rapid development, it was rather slowed down. It did not keep up with a country development. Nevertheless, Dreiser's creativity had brought the mite into this process. Dreiser had brought a live breath of life into the American literature, his vision and estimation of the American society. This feature was noted by Sinclair Lewis, who told about Dreiser that he "had literally rushed into the stuffy and musty atmosphere of America as the impulse of an unrestrained wind, and for the first time since the times of Mark Twain and Walt Whitman brought into our Puritan life a stream of fresh air".

The creativity of Dreiser had cleared the way for following generation of the American writers. In many respects, thanks to Dreiser, that we learned not only Sinclair Lewis, but also Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway.

Therefore the interest to the creativity of Dreiser did not weaken in the course of time. Using his works many dissertations are defended, his creativity is very interesting to students and readers. America became a great power ambiguous in the estimations of contemporaries, but for the first

¹³ Zasursky J. N., American literature of the XX century (2nd edition, revised), Moscow University Press, 1984, p. 504

time Dreiser presented to a common reader a panorama of the American society and his characters still may cause curiosity and a keen interest.¹⁴

The end of the XIX century in the political and literary life of the USA was marked by a high heat of struggle. The Spanish-American war, the capture of Philippines, creation of the National association of industrialists and the strengthening of domination of monopolies in machinery of state, the approach of banks, of industrial corporations and of railway magnates to important interests and the democratic rights of workers and farmers – that was a wide front of reaction in external and internal policy by which the process of capitalism transition of the USA into the imperialistic stage was noted. The beginning of the XX century in the development of the American imperialism was marked by the strengthening of the economic contradictions that had poured into the crisis of 1900-1903 years. The imperialistic reaction caused fierce resistance of the democratic forces of America - the Anti-imperialistic league opposed aggressive wars, populists became on protection of the democratic freedom and interests of farmers, activity of the social democratic and socialist parties in the political arena increased, strike movement strengthened.

The American literature was sharply involved in both political and ideological fights, despite the diligence of representatives of the school of the so-called refined tradition to keep it far from the life of broad masses. Writers of this school, dominating in the 80th years in the bourgeois literature of the USA, as Dreiser noted in the autobiographical book "Newspaper days" in 1922, "wrote about kindness, softness, beauty, successes in life, there was felt the spirit of the old south in their stories, and their poetry was only poetry and nothing else".¹⁵ In magazines of Harper such writers as William Din Howells, Charles Warner and many others, described nobleness of the characters, victims, and greatness of the ideals and pleasure of simple things.

William Dean Howells played an important role in the formation and in the development of the realistic literature of the USA, was a resolute opponent of the school of "refined tradition", the propagandist of the creativity of L. N. Tolstoy and the defender of figures of the working-class movement which were exposed to prosecutions for participation in a mass strike in May, 1886. Howells urged to grasp life "without those literary eye-glasses which were believed to be necessary for a long period of time, to see the character not as represented in many literary works but as realistic out of these works of art". Howells helped Stephen Crane, Franck Norris to come to the

¹⁴ Thorp W., "American writing in the twentieth century", Harvard University Press, 1960, p.55

¹⁵ Theodore Dreiser, "Newspaper days", University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991, p.28

literature. Therefore it was not surprising that Dreiser named Howells as "The great literary philanthropist" in 1890, and enthusiastically confirmed that he was the eldest, humanistic and generous representative of the American literature.

Theodore Dreiser -the known American writer and a public figure was born on the 27th of August in 1871 in the State of Indiana and died on the 28th of December in 1945 in Hollywood.

Early years:

Parents of Dreiser - John Dreiser (Johann Paul Dreiser, the German emigrated to the USA in 1846) and Sara Schanab were the co-owners of wool-spinning factory. After the fire which had destroyed stocks of wool, the father worked on a building work where he was damaged heavily. Three elder sons were lost afterwards. The family moved for a long period of time and, finally, had located in a provincial town Terre Haute of the State of Indiana. Theodore Dreiser, the twelfth child in the family, was born on August, 27th, 1871. In 1887 Dreiser finished school. In 1889 entered the University of the State of Indiana. A year later Dreiser left studying at the University since he could not afford it any more. He could not pay for study. Then he worked as the clerk, as the driver of a laundry van.

Correspondence:

Dreiser decided to become a reporter. In 1892-1894 years he worked as a reporter in the newspapers of Pittsburgh, Toledo, Chicago and Saint Louis. He moved to New York in 1894. His brother Pol Dresser published a musical magazine "Every month", and Dreiser started to work as the editor of that magazine. In 1897 Dreiser left this work as well. These works were written on order: "Harper", "Metropolitan", "Cosmopolitan".

One of the first literary works published by Dreiser was a sketch or a magazine article "New York's Art Colony", November 1897. Before occurrence of the first novel in 1900 Dreiser had published 42 articles and a number of poems. Dreiser noted in his interview for a directory "Who is who in America" (1899) that he wrote two books: "Researches about the well-known contemporaries" - sketches about Wilhelm II, Barnum etc. - and "Poems".

Dreiser created several novels, representing "grey, everyday life" of the American reality, exposing a myth about America as the country of "boundless possibilities" ("Sister Carrie" - the way of a simple American girl to success, underlining accidental success of the heroine who came from

the bottom of the life of the working women). Usually the bibliography of Dreiser's works begins with his novel "Sister Carrie" (1900). This literary work of Dreiser continued the realistic traditions of the American writers of the end of the XIX century (F. Norris, S. Crane), but in the conditions of decline of this movement. The novel was met by the criticism and by the society extremely bad, as an "immoral" literary work. Dreiser showed a realistic image of the girl, opposing the standard moral views without prejudices and puritanism usual for that time. Only in 1911 Dreiser published the second novel - "Jennie Gerhardt" where he developed the motives of "Sister Carrie". The American press ignored the novel by the complete silence.

In "Trilogy of Desire" ("The Financier" (1912), "The Titan" (1913), "The Genius" (1915)) on an example of the career of the protagonist Cowperwood, the author portrayed the destiny of the entire nation which had appeared to be under a heel of monopolies in the end of 19 centuries.

Dreiser began his monumental "Trilogy of Desire" with the novel "The Financier" (1912). The history of life of the millionaire Ch. Yerkes was taken as the basis of the novel. The hero of "Trilogy" (the second volume - "The Titan", 1914; Dreiser started the third volume - "The Stoic" in January, 1929) – Frank Cowperwood; Dreiser showed, how the bourgeois and commercial environment surrounding Cowperwood, since the childhood had already formed inside of him the psychology of the businessman and the purchaser for whom all the means were good if they helped to reach the power and wealth. Having begun with small gamble, Cowperwood gradually got a condition, bribed officials and municipality, illegally bought city concessions in Philadelphia, however finally he failed, and he was put into the prison and then he was compelled to leave Philadelphia. In the novel "The Titan", Dreiser developed the life of Cowperwood in Chicago where on the expanded base the cycle of his activity in Philadelphia repeated.

"Trilogy of Desire" was the most significant literary work of the American and European literature of the XX century. Dreiser depicted the life and the customs of the financial environment with an exclusive graphic force.

The attacks of conservative criticism were especially raised after the publication of the novel "The Genius" in 1916 which was considered as the best literary work of Dreiser. On an insistence of "The Society for the Suppression of Vice" the court had forbidden the distribution and publication of the novel, and later on this interdiction was removed. A theme of the novel was the power of the money and of the sensuality over the art. The hero of the novel was a painter Witla whose purpose

of existence was reduced only to the art and to the women. This fact devastated his creativity; he became a succeeding businessman and lost his artistic abilities.

In the novel "An American tragedy" (1925) Dreiser deduced the average American young man Griffiths, who had a little education, was thoughtless, weak-willed. The essence of the tragedy of Griffiths who ended his life on an electric chair was a social impracticality to the surrounding reality, combined with the aspiration to be put forward, occupy an exclusive position and to be included into the bourgeois circles. Griffiths became a victim of the American pseudo-democracy. As well as in the all novels, Dreiser gave a wide picture of the customs and of the life of the environment represented by him in "An American tragedy". The novel was considered as the one of the most successful literary works of the writer. Right after the release it had received good responses of criticism. In 1930 film studio Paramount Pictures ordered the scenario to the Soviet director Sergey Eisenstein. However after a month the contract was terminated - the scenario did not suit the studio. Besides it, the organization of Hollywood Technical Director's Institute began the criticism of the director from the USSR. In 1931 Dreiser brought an action against the studio. According to the writer, in a film of director Joseph Sternberg the sense of his book was deformed.

Dreiser was an artist-naturalist. He built his literary works on an enormous material of supervision and experience. His art was an art of the exact image to scrupulousness, the art of the facts and things. Dreiser depicted a life in all the smallest details, he added the documents sometimes almost entirely taken from the reality (letters of Roberta Alden in "An American tragedy" were taken almost entirely), quoted the press, largely explained stock market speculations of the heroes, attentively followed the development of their business enterprises etc. The American critics repeatedly accused Dreiser of the absence of style, without understanding the special nature of his naturalistic style.

In all his literary works Dreiser was inclined to the social themes that did not prevent him to be an artist-psychologist. Taking public themes, he moved them to a plane of individual mentality, showing the psychologically-individual part of the big public phenomena, as a result. Theme restriction in the volume was accompanied by its deepening in the literary works of Dreiser.

In November, 1932 Dreiser concluded the contract with Paramount on the directory of the novel "Jennie Gerhardt". In 1944 the American academy of arts and literature awarded Dreiser by an honorable gold medal for outstanding achievements in the field of art and the literature.

Dreiser had two collections of stories - "Free and other stories" (1918) and "Chains" in which there were mainly developed psychological and sexual motives. He also wrote two volumes of plays: "The Hand of the Potter" (1919) and "Plays of the natural and supernatural" (1916).

Early sketches of Dreiser about New York were collected in his book "The Color of a Great City" (1923). "Hey Rub-A-Dub-Dub" (1919) - the collection of articles of Dreiser. The most interesting from which it was the article "An American financier".

Biographical sketches of Dreiser were collected in "A Gallery for Women" as well as in "Twelve Men".

As well as in the latest book, Dreiser addressed to the most various public layers, trying to discover in them the original and outstanding people. But "A Gallery for Women" sharply differed from "Twelve Men" in that Dreiser mentioned sexuality; in the sexuality he searched for the explanations of not only purely subjective, but also of social acts and processes. Dreiser's novel "Madness" (1929) represented a number of love episodes, incorporated themes in the center of which the author himself was put.

In 1930 the nominee of Dreiser was put forward to get Nobel Prize on literature but by a majority of votes the award was given to the writer Sinclair Lewis.

In May, 1931 there was published his autobiographical book "Dawn" where Dreiser described his childhood and youth.

Social activities:

In 1927 Dreiser accepted the invitation to visit the USSR and to take part in the celebration of the anniversary of the October revolution. In the beginning of November he arrived to the Soviet Union and on November, 7th was on the Red Square. During his travel consisting of 77 days Dreiser visited Baku, Tbilisi, Odessa and other cities. After a trip he published the book "Dreiser looks at Russia".

In the early thirties in the mining regions of the USA - Harlan and Bell there were collisions of miners with police. Together with the commission of committee of protection of political prisoners Dreiser went to the place of events. He was met by threats of physical violence from owners of mines and police. There was brought the judicial suit against Dreiser and he was suggested to be withdrawn provided on that the writer stopped the illumination of the events.

However Dreiser continued his performances in newspapers and on radio, informing about the state of affairs - beatings of members of the trade union and police punishments. In 1932, he published the book "Tragic America".

Dreiser often acted on meetings, was published on the pages of the communistic press of the USA. In 1932 he supported the candidate of the American Communist Party in the election campaign. In 1932 he was a member of the world anti-war congress, which initiative committee included Maxim Gorky, Albert Einstein.

In 1938 Dreiser was delegated on anti-war conference in Paris, opened connected with the bombardments of the Spanish cities. He visited Barcelona where met the president and the prime minister of the country in the summer. On the way back Dreiser visited England where hoped to meet members of the English government. In the USA he managed to achieve a short-term meeting with Roosevelt. Moreover, Dreiser unsuccessfully tried to organize committee for the delivery of foodstuffs to Spain. As a result of it under Roosevelt's instructions there were sent cargo courts with flour to Spain.

In July, 1945 Dreiser became the member of the Communist party of the USA. Theodore Dreiser died on December, 28th, 1945 on the 75 year of life.

Criticism:

"Heavy, heavy the feet of Theodore. How easy to pick some of his books to pieces, to laugh at him for so much of his heavy prose..",- wrote the friend and the follower of the Theodore Dreiser, a remarkable master of the American literature, Sherwood Anderson. Dreiser moved apart the horizons of the American realistic literature, despite of all the difficulties and barriers which appeared on his ways by bourgeois America, despite of blackmail and the threats pursuing all his creative life.

The known American critic and publicist Henry Mencken wrote after the death of Dreiser in 1945: "He was a great artist; no other American of his generation had left such a strong and fine trace in our national literature. The American literature till and after Dreiser's time differed almost the same as biology before and after Darwin. He was the person of the great originality, deep

responsiveness and unshakable bravery. To all of us, who writes, it is easier because of that he lived, worked and hoped".¹⁶

Many best traditions of the American literature of the nineteenth century were developed in the literary works of Dreiser: the traditions of romanticists of F. Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, fighters for the freedom of Blacks Henry David Toro and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

The acute aversion of the world of business connected closer the relations of Dreiser with Cooper, with whom he was united also by a detailed manner of a narration. Condemnation of Puritan hypocrisy and practice, self-love and money-making since early years had drawn the attention of Dreiser to Hawthorne - to one of his favorite writers; Melville in this respect was not less close to Dreiser, - it was not casual that American critic Danforth Ross compared the story of H. Melville "Bartleby, the Scrivener" with the works of Dreiser. Passionate pathos of accusation of all forms and displays of social injustice pulls together Dreiser with abolitionists. The eremite, the fighter against Henry David Toro's slavery was especially close to him. At the height of the active antifascist publicist activity in the thirties Dreiser published the book of the selected works of the given American writer and the philosopher "Toro's Live thoughts", to which he wrote the warm and pathetic preface. The sharp critics of "the gilded age" Mark Twain and Walt Whitman, the poet of the independent work of the human wise were direct forerunners of Dreiser.

Some backlogs in the nineteenth century, late blossom of the romantic school and of the development of realism, later than in the majority of the European countries were peculiar to the development of the literary process in the USA. The merit of Theodore Dreiser is especially great in the acceleration of this development in the twentieth century.

Dreiser returned live breath of life to the American literature, he "had rushed into the stuffy and musty atmosphere of America as the impulse of an unrestrained wind, and for the first time since the times of Mark Twain and Whitman he had brought in our Puritan use a stream of fresh air", - Sinclair Lewis told in 1930.¹⁷

Severe and unshakable struggle for facts of life of the twentieth century of the American literature Dreiser had opened and laid a way to a galaxy of the largest American writers - to Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson, to William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway.

¹⁶ William H. Nolte, "H.L. Mencken's Smart Set Criticism", United States Gateway Edition, 1987, p.78

¹⁷ James M. Hutchinson and Stephen R. Pastore "Sinclair Lewis and Reexamination of their relationship", Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 1999, p.101

In the beginning of the century the career of Dreiser was characterized by an increase of the protest against barbarous cruelty of a capitalist society, an exit from which he did not see.

Dreiser considered that the American reality with the false external well-being was tragic and awful, in his opinion, a problem of realistic writers was the description of all sides and parts of the American life: not only the sports, the life of Hollywood, the creation of trusts and corporation, the occurrence of new cars, but also "the hell and purgatory" of the American life.

The theme of the American dream - a myth about America as about the promised land where any cleaner of boots can become the millionaire received its final completeness in the novel of Dreiser "An American tragedy" (1925). The dream turned back to illusion, original humanity appeared to be incompatible with bourgeois standards of happiness. America which deceived the hero of the novel sent him on an electric chair though he had consistently executed the official formula of success.

The way from the American dream to the American tragedy, investigated by Dreiser was the main artistic opening of the whole creativity of the writer.

Documentarily stories of Clyde were confirmed by the ten similar cases taken by Dreiser from newspapers and judicial chronicle. They also provide a moral reliability of the investigation of the writer; grant him the right to the reckless criticism of the state foundations of America, of all its institutes - from a family to court.

The novel "An American tragedy" became one of tops of realism of Dreiser: a deep psychology of the novel was closely connected with the social analysis, the writer showed formation of spiritual shape of a human under the influence of the environment. Dreiser had left a deep trace in the American literature.

Chapter II: Socio-literary analyses of "An American Tragedy" by Theodore Dreiser

§1 Plot summary and structural analyses of "An American Tragedy"

"An American Tragedy" was published in the mid-twenties, passed under the badge of disreputable "prosperity". Silver-tongued orators of the American propagation broadcast for the whole world about approach of the "Gilded Age" to the USA.

“Haven’t all of us become rich men?” - asked the title of the article of the magazine "Colyers" and answered: “the one who wants to be poor is poor only or has suffered from accident or illness, and such we have a minute quantity”.

During the time of an impetuous development of the literature there was a book of Dreiser, saying what disappeared behind a facade of the ostentatious well-being. This book was simply and severely called: “An American Tragedy”. In the given book Dreiser in a new way represented the sorrows and grieves of the life of the ordinary men which were always close to him. For the first time the destruction of the human person in America had appeared before the writer as an inevitable result of action of laws of the American society, as a product of a deep national illness, national disaster, national accident of the USA, as an American tragedy. The humanism of Dreiser in “An American Tragedy” became more active and socially realized. It goes without saying that Dreiser named the novel as “some kind of the class epos in which the class antagonism covering the whole world today” was reflected.

The plot that was implied into the basis of novel “An American Tragedy” had interested Dreiser at the very beginning of his literary activity, soon after the publication of the novel “Sister of Carrie”. That time Dreiser worked over the novel "the Rake" the plot of which in some moments coincided with “An American Tragedy”. Dreiser devoted almost five years to the creation of the novel “An American Tragedy”, since 1920 till 1925. According to Dreiser a plan of “An American Tragedy” was “not to moralize but to give, if it was possible, the background and psychology of the reality which if do not justify but somehow explain how such murders happen, since they met in America surprisingly frequent for so long time as he could remember”.¹⁸

Helene Dreiser remembered that the writer had the notes entitled “the American Tragedies”, which contained the description of fifteen cases similar to that which was represented in the novel.

“In the summer of 1905 there took place a murder on the Adirondack mountains, Big Moose Lake. It was a story of Chester Gillette, the young worker at factory of collars in Cortland, the State of New York, and of Grace Brown the daughter of the farmers living not far from the South Otselic, the State of New York who worked together with Gillette. For the first time Americans heard about the event from a note printed in a small magazine of Old-Forge of the small town located near to the lake of Big Moose. According to the message, the young man and the girl, arrived to spend their

¹⁸ Leonard Cassuto, Clare Virginia Eby, The Cambridge Companion to Theodore Dreiser, 2004, p.52

weekend on the lake of Big Moose, drove a boat on the lake, and both drowned. The turned out boat and its floating passengers were found out at a great distance from coast.

The lake was carefully surveyed, but there was found only one body in which Grace Brown was identified. Then followed the message about the young man with whom she was seen. He spent his time in a cheerful company in the country house located on the bank of one of the nearest lakes. He had appeared to be Chester Gillette, the nephew of the owner of factory of collars in Cortland. From the letters of the girls found in his room, it was cleared out that they were close, and she waited for the child and begged him to marry her. In the last letter she threatened him, declaring that if he did not marry her she would come to Cortland and would expose him before his all-important friends. He was arrested and was brought an accusation in murder. The district attorney established that the wound had been put to the girl either by hanging, or by the broken tennis racket which was found out under a log in the nearest wood. It had been proved that it was bought by Gillette; this fact appeared enough to the district court to recognize him guilty in murdering. The execution on an electric chair in an unbearable prison of Auburn waited the young man, and before his death he confessed the fault, having referred that the girl prevented him to marry the rich successor».

This history had formed a basis for a writing of "An American tragedy".

Dreiser very carefully worked over a novel writing. In the course of work on the book he studied all the materials of the process, visited all the places which were mentioned in the case, especially Cortland, Otselic, the lake Big-Moose. For the truthful description of last days of the protagonist Clyde Griffiths in a condemned camera the writer talked to Anthon Pontano, who was waiting to be executed on an electric chair. The novel manuscript corresponded more than six times.

During the writing of the novel Dreiser was deeply interested in the literary works of Dostoevsky, read his "Crime and punishment" twice. The people, who closely knew the writer during his work over "An American tragedy", noticed that the enthusiastic relation of Dreiser to the creative activity of Dostoevsky had affected his work on the novel, particularly, over the image of Clyde.

Dreiser polemically directed the given literary work against the apologetic fictions which with approval of the authorities had already filled the American book market. In similar books the history of the poor young man which had grown rich, having been married, on the girl from a well-

founded family was usually described. Such novels inspired false ideas about the possibility for an each American to change the destiny easily and glorified aspiration to an enrichment.

Forming the plot of the novel on the same motives, Dreiser had discredited this idea of a pursuit of an easy happiness and had created an original panorama of the American society. About his aspiration to the all-round capture of the reality Dreiser wrote on April, 1927: "I've deliberated long over these incidents for it seemed to me that this not only displayed each party of our national life -politics, society, religion, business, sex- that was a history, so usual for an each young man who has grown up in small cities of America. It was an exclusively true story about what the life does with the person and how the person is powerless against it".¹⁹

The novel had appeared on book markets in the middle of December, 1925.

The published "An American tragedy" at once became a literary sensation, and its author - a celebrity. Unlike the other novels of Dreiser, "An American tragedy" had been highly appreciated by criticism. Magazine "Nation" named it "the greatest American novel of our generation", laudatory articles have appeared in many newspapers and magazines.

Having read the novel Herbert Wells wrote, - "Dreiser is the genius in the highest value of this word".

Right after the writing of the novel Dreiser left New York for the rest of the soul after a hard work. The girlfriend of writer Helene Richardson remembered: "Some weeks later ... we have received the authentic message from New York that "An American tragedy" had an improbable success. Reading this message, Teddy hardly could believe his eyes. His books had never met such unanimous approval earlier, and he was adjusted skeptically. But it was necessary to believe to the enthusiastic reviews and letters of congratulations and telegrams which came with a continuous stream".²⁰

"An American Tragedy" was a top of the creativity of the American writer Theodore Dreiser. There were more profoundly embodied, the talent of the artist, of the humanist who laid the new ways both in literature, and in life.

¹⁹ Miriam Gogol, Theodore Dreiser beyond Naturalism., 1995, p.45

²⁰ Donald Pizer, "The novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study", 1976, p.113

The center of the novel is the history of an ordinary American of Clyde Griffiths, the son of poor parents.

Clyde Griffiths was essentially different from the previous creations of the writer by his ordinariness, commonness and mediocrity. Carrie possessed the talent of the actor, Jennie Gerhardt amazed and surprised the audience and the reader with sincere riches of the soul, Cowperwood was compared to the Lucifer by the writer, Witla had a talent of the artist. Clyde did not have the talents of Witla and Carrie, he had no resourcefulness and force of Cowperwood, and he had no sincere beauty and cleanliness of Jennie. He was a usual and ordinary American young man, “an average young American with a typically American outlook on life”. The tragedy of Clyde was like and unlike the tragedy of Witla or Jennie. Bourgeois America crushed a sincere cleanliness of Jennie, mocked at her secret and sincere feelings; bourgeois America ruined the talent of Witla; the destiny of Clyde was tragic just because he followed the laws of the bourgeois America and in the process of forces and possibilities executed them so his tragedy was more terrible, the tragedy of a simple American, the American tragedy.

Clyde was an embodiment of commonness, and in this sense he was also typical. Illusions and the dreams, imparted to him in the childhood, defined also the further destiny of the young man captured by insuperable desire to achieve an easy life by all means.

We explored that together with the image of Clyde the writer accented instability, pliability to influences of environment. The narration was formed in such a manner that Clyde was in the center of our attention all the time throughout the novel, and at the same time the forces which were building up his character were accurately and clearly visible. Dreiser tried to explain and to prove that “conversations in a lobby, - without mentioning the scenes in the bar, at restaurants and in hotel rooms, were enough and sufficient to inspire to the each non-skilled and not so legible being as if the main thing and the only employment in the life for everyone who had some money and position in a society was to go to the theatres, to visit stadium in the summer, to dance, to go for a drive in a car, to treat friends with dinners and to go for an entertainment to New York, Europe, Chicago or California”.

We observed that in this way there were revealed a social conditionality of Clyde’s behavior who aspired to get to the world of luxury and wealth. These dreams and aspirations defined also his relation to Roberta Alden. Clyde thought, “Let this girl was poor and also, by misfortune, it was necessary for her to become an ordinary working woman, - he could be happy with by her all means,

but on the condition that it was not necessary to marry her. Coming to the marriage, there ambitious Clyde was as if under hypnosis: he married the girl from a circle Griffiths!"²¹ Marriage with a rich girl seemed to Clyde as a path to the execution of his secret desires. Career was more expensive to him than those feelings which he had to Roberta. In the consciousness of Clyde love was inseparable from splendor, pleasures, riches, wealth and from a foreground in a society. So there were created the preconditions for the tragedy of Clyde and Roberta.

In "An American Tragedy" there was reached that surprising artistic integrity which distinguished truthful and realistic works of art. Both the novel title, and its composition, both a landscape, and author's deviations, and logic of the development of characters, and their psychology in "An American Tragedy" reveal the responsibility of the American bourgeois society over the tragedy of Clyde Griffiths.

The width of a social plan of "An American Tragedy" was lightened and shown in the composition of the novel as well. Dreiser wrote about the composition of "An American Tragedy" on April, 1931: "This novel should represent in three various social and economic spheres the career of a very sensitive, but not so developed fellow who finds out that his life right at the beginning period is complicated by poverty and by a low social status out of which he tries to escape, obeying various desires primordial for him and serving by incentive force"²². Explaining his thought, Dreiser notices that the first part of the book had been devoted to the image of such social hardship which could naturally suppress, constrain and upset, and consequently exaggerate the emotions and the desires of a very sensitive fellow badly adapted to the great vital struggle which faced to any youth.

The second part, according to the words of Dreiser, was specially intended to show that such a temperament and volition could be casually confronted with much more successful world which would develop in him the aspiration to luxury and love, and could prosecute, how in an unequal competition between poverty, illiteracy and the great temptations of the world he could be really and easily without any participation from his part defeated and even be accused of murder as it was happened to Griffiths.

The third part had been carefully planned by Dreiser so that to demonstrate, how such a weak person of no character – firstly the captive of his personal dreams, and then of the law - could easily become a victim of afflicted with prejudices and vindictive provincial politicians who, in their

²¹ Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1>.

²² Theodore Dreiser. "Life, Art and America", 1988, p.33

turn, because of the social and religious limitation could not in any way apprehend the calming and the softening circumstances of the crime and consequently, judge him much more cruelly, than the people more acute and intellectually gifted.

So, the first book – exposition of the novel - was devoted to the formation of Clyde's character, the second book –was devoted to a tragic death of Roberta, the third book - was devoted to the death of Clyde. Into the basis of the plot there was laid the development of Clyde's character and personality in its mutual relation with society. Clyde was cheated and fooled by a saleswoman Hortense Briggs. Entertainments in Kansas City came to an end sadly for Clyde, - on the way back from the party, the car in which there were Clyde and his friends, stroke the girl, and furthermore, when the frightened young men tried to escape from police, there took place a road accident. Frightened to the death Clyde ran away from Kansas City. So the youth of Clyde, who had left the parental house came to an end and his independent life started.

In the second book, after the drudgeries and deprivations which Clyde underwent and had to bear during the wanderings on various cities of America, he was got under the guardianship of his rich uncle-manufacturer. It seemed to Clyde that he could promote his career at last. On his way there appeared Roberta Alden which worked under his supervision and depended fully on him. Though Roberta was not among those girls of non- strict rules, Clyde managed to reach what he could not achieve from a highly experienced Hortense Briggs by flirting, courting and generous gifts.

Clyde was not going to marry Roberta from the beginning of their acquaintance. The meeting with a rich Sondra Finchley gave some idea to Clyde about the possibility to enter so much desired world for him and had forced to search for ways in order to get off from Roberta, who disturbed him then. . Underlining and emphasizing thrift of Clyde, Dreiser mentioned that Roberta was more pleasant and attractive to him and he liked her more. She was gentler, softer, kinder, and not so cold. At the same time Sondra “embodied and immeasurably increased in his eyes the value of her circle”, and Clyde treated her differently, - “unlike his feeling to Roberta in the beginning period of time, his relations and feelings to Sondre were not so sensitive. The relations of Clyde to Roberta were dictated by the passion; however his attention to Sondra was attracted by reckoning, by the thoughts about wealth and by worship to that he considered as a high society. The passion to Roberta had been killed by the passion to enter the world of the rich.

Dreiser underlined the similarity of the characters of Clyde and Roberta. Clyde for naive Roberta personified the luxurious and rich world. "Having met Clyde, Roberta was so passionate of him and besides of it imagined that he belonged to a certain high society. And the same poison of uneasy vanity which poisoned Clyde as well had also got into her soul". Therefore she had so persistently tried to achieve, that Clyde would marry her, and had some sexual relations with him though considered that it was bad, immoral and unaccepted.

Clyde and Roberta were not so experienced and qualified in everyday affairs especially in housekeeping. Reading "An American Tragedy" we observed that Dreiser showed and proved that Clyde by his character could not ever be able to become quite an adult person. Their relations came to an end with a tragic death of Roberta.

Scrupulously, as though under a magnifying glass looking through all the circumstances, facts and conditions of the tragedy on the Big Moose lake, Dreiser motivated all the actions which were made by Clyde, aspiring to get rid from Roberta.

Clyde read a newspaper article about the accident on the lake Naas describing the same situation as in the book "An American Tragedy". Further Dreiser transferred the way of Clyde's thoughts which had led him to his fatal way out: "So, he and Roberta were in a boat, and the boat overturned ... and now when he was so tormented with all these awful complications. There was a way out! How simply would this puzzling, painful problem be resolved! However ... stop! No hasten. No hurry! Could a human, at least in his personal thoughts admit for himself such a way out of a deadlock, without committing a crime in the heart – a really awful and monstrous crime? No, it was impossible even to think of it. It was nasty ... very nasty, awfully! And, however, if - certainly, it was unintentional - the misfortune happened nevertheless. After all it would be the end of all his worries and anxieties because of Roberta..."²³

The external reason which had caused such confusion in the thoughts of Clyde although was not so considerable, but led to the chain of events, coming to the end with the death Roberta and the condemnation and accusation of Clyde.

Dreiser did not aspire to transform Clyde into a complete villain, the villain, the murderer and together with that did not justify him. He wanted to show the true originators and the sinners of

²³ Dreiser, Theodore. Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", 4th ed., New York: The World Publishing Company, 1964, p.68

the death of Roberta, he wanted to show the very degree of a moral degradation of Clyde, who absorbing an individualistic spirit of the American bourgeois society became the criminal, yet without having committed a crime. After all Clyde understood that if he got rid from Roberta having drowned her in the lake he will become a murderer. He was not sure thinking about the possible consequences of his action. The internal struggle filled and happened to him testifying the presence of his sincere confusion. Observing these sensitive and hard struggles of Clyde we cleared out that Dreiser announced a claim not so much to Clyde, but to those who had morally prepared him for a crime.

From the description of Roberta's death it was impossible to make a conclusion that Clyde had legally committed murdering, or to establish the degree of his fault. The known American lawyer Clarence Darrow declared that it was impossible to define Clyde's fault, since the events and the facts were mixed.

So, in the third, final book there was a proceeding Clyde's court case. Again there were passed the circumstances at which the crime had been committed. Again there was established and announced the guilt of the society, but the American justice accused Clyde, declared him guilty although it was difficult to establish and to prove his fault. That was a society which drove Clyde to crime and put him on an electric chair.

The tragedy of Clyde consisted of not only of a commitment of a crime, but also of how he was judged. The destiny of Clyde was predetermined long before the court beginning. He had become a toy in a pre-election struggle of the two bourgeois parties. Bribeability of the American justice, its partiality, and adherence to the interests of small groups personified the images of public prosecutor Mr. Mason, inspector Mr. Heit and of the numerous lawyers.

So, the theme of the money which had become persuasive even today, occupied the main place in "An American tragedy". Money defined the destinies of the heroes.

§2 Thematic stylistic models of description in the novel

Dreiser underlined and emphasized the social character of the novel: "It was an exclusively true story about what life does with the person and how the person is powerless against it".²⁴

"An American tragedy" by its entire scale and diversity is a very integral book, subordinated to a uniform powerful rhythm. The impression of the power occurs not from a figure of the hero but from the logic of the development of his destiny, the name of which is Inevitability. The artistic eye-sight of Dreiser allowed him to see the tragedy of the destiny in an ordinary criminal case. His tragic predefinitions first vaguely, but slowly cleared up, appearing more and more distinct, and introducing a dramatic intensity in the novel. The logic of the character together with the logic of the circumstances exhausted Clyde in a trap.

The responsibility and the fault of Clyde were extremely important to Dreiser and that was the question of the third and the last part of the novel. The Jury of the devoted trial recognized Clyde guilty, not having thought at all of what had made him murderer (even if in his mind). Such a loud process was necessary to the judge to flash before voters during the period of the elections everywhere. That is why Judge Mason gave it a sensational nature, played on the emotions of the crowd, read intimate letters of dead woman, having forgotten about her reputation and a professional honor.

The secret of the court according to which the criminal can be both justified, and condemned, the accident of the death sentence of Clyde –these were the questions, answering to which Dreiser wrote socially-psychological annals of a typically American crime. The gloomiest pages of the novel were devoted to the description of "the Death House" where Clyde stood in the expectation of the execution.

Eisenstein to whom Dreiser had suggested to write the scenario, at once defined that the crime, which Griffiths was going to do, was "a total result of those public relations to the influence of which he was exposed at the each stage of his developing biography and character ..."²⁵ he also noted: "Clyde Griffiths was the villain of the piece and produced a script for a fourteen-reel silent film."²⁶ Later, in an article about the debacle for *Close up*, Eisenstein reported that Paramount expected a "simple defective story... about a love affair between a boy and a girl"²⁷ and thus

²⁴ Frohock, W.M. Theodore Dreiser, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972, p. 25

²⁵ Eisenstein S. "An American Tragedy", *Close up* 10, p. 109-24

²⁶ Keith Newlin, "A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia", Greenwood Press, Library of Congress, 2003

²⁷ Ibid

rejected the script. The studio may also have been uncomfortable with the film's indictment of American society and bleak tone²⁸.

Eisenstein as a great artist, had caught in the novel that little thing which was clear only to the less, - "the game of the destiny".²⁹ Defenselessness of the person before his fate gave rise to the pathos of compassion which made the author of the American novel about a crime and punishment related with Dostoevsky. If in antique tragedy the fate appeared as ignorance in "the American tragedy" it appeared in the form of a public system.

Among novels of Dreiser "An American tragedy" was differentiated by the in-depth and full coverage and analysis of the phenomena of the American life. "The novel of Dreiser is wide and boundless, as Hudson; it is immense, as life",³⁰ - the Soviet film director S. Eisenstein wrote.

However, "An American tragedy" could not avoid the standard criticism of critics in the ponderousness and the complexity of his style for a part of the American criticism which was hostile to Dreiser.

Answering to the similar attacks of the critic T. K. Whipple in a weekly journal "New Republic", Henry Miller fairly wrote that "the force of the Dreiser's novel was reached not contrary to, but thanks and owing to his style. Those "cheap, beaten and old" receptions helped him to present us the world which could be shown and hinted in a more elegant and delicate style. He used the language, consciously or unconsciously or even irresponsibly, in a manner in which the modern writers, for instance Joyce, used it intentionally, i.e. he identified the language with the consciousness of his heroes".³¹

Margaret Cheder was more definite by telling that the style of Dreiser distinguished that true grace with which a huge elephant moved, despite a seeming awkwardness.

Most precisely Herbert Wells answered to these critics: "It is much more, than a simple and important description of a typical poor corner of the American reality shined with flash of sad

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Eisenstein S. "An American Tragedy", Close up 10p. 109-24

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Leonard Cassuto, Clare Virginia Eby, The Cambridge Companion to Theodore Dreiser, 2004, p. 52

tragedy. It transfers a big, severe, real truth with the force, which no grammatical accuracy can reach”³².

“An American tragedy” had finished a very important chapter in the history of the struggle for a realistic art in the USA, against the restrictions which were demanded by the bourgeois criticism and publishers. These requirements in the end of the nineteenth century were recognized even by such a theorist of realism, as the American writer and the literary critic, Din Howells.

In 1891 Howells asserted that the books with a plot similar to that which was laid down in a basis of a "Crime and punishment" of F. Dostoevsky were impossible in America. Howells wrote: «... one of the thoughts which came to me while reading the novel of Dostoevsky "Crime and punishment", was that if somebody would sing the note so deeply tragic in the American literature it would be a false and erroneous step. ... our novelists therefore were engaged with more smiley aspects of life which were also more American, they would more likely search the universality in the person, than in social interests”.³³

Dreiser denied Howells with his novel. It was evident that many critics named “An American tragedy” as the American "Crime and punishment", since it was possible to find the lines of Dostoevsky’s influence in this novel, and Dreiser repeatedly told about his interest to Dostoevsky and to the novel "Crime and punishment" and proved it to Howells by showing that a tragic destiny of the human person were the integral property of the American society and that the notions "tragic" and "American" were the concepts close to each other.

In “An American tragedy” Dreiser saw the system cutting the person, and those resolute shifts in attitude of Dreiser’s world perception were shown in it. The humanism of Dreiser in “An American tragedy” became more active and socially realized. Dreiser named this novel as “some kind of the class epos in which the class antagonism covering the whole world today” was reflected.

The plot which was laid down into the basis of the novel “An American tragedy”, interested Dreiser at the very beginning of his literary activity, soon after the publication of the novel “Sister Carrie”. Dreiser remembered that the writer had a manuscript. There was contained the description of fifteen cases similar to that which was represented in the novel. For each of them it was

³² Ibid

³³ Keith Newlin, “A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia”, Greenwood Press, Library of Congress, 2003, p. 70

characteristic the aspiration of the American young men to become rich, having been married to the rich brides. For the sake of it they went on a crime: killed their former beloved - the poor girl. Having studied all this material, the writer decided to base on the novel the story of the murdering, made in 1906 by Chester Gillette of the beloved Grace Brown. The process on this case had received then a wide publicity, and in "An American tragedy" there were used the documents and the facts informed and published in newspapers of that time. Dreiser polemically directed the work against the certain types of the novels extended and popular in the USA. In the similar books there was described usually the history of a poor young man which becomes rich, having married the girl from a well-founded family. Such novels inspired false ideas about the possibility for an each American easily to change the destiny and glorified aspiration to enrichment. It was one of the most widespread kinds of the apologetic bourgeois literature intended to the fooling of wide reader's audiences.

In "An American tragedy" Dreiser, building a novel plot on the same aspirations of the poor young man of Clyde Griffiths, not only discredited the idea of a pursuit of an easy happiness, but also revealed the perversity of the system generating the aspiration to become rich by all means. In "An American tragedy" the original panorama of the American life is created. Dreiser wrote about the aspiration to the all-round coverage of life in "An American tragedy" in his letter to Jack Wilgus on April, 20th, 1927: "I've long deliberated over this incident; An American tragedy seemed to me, to include every phase of our national life... It seemed so surely a story of what life does to the individual- and how impotent the individual is against such forces." Far more than a mere depiction of current civilization, the novel encompasses the national experience and sets forth the American dream, the indigenous national myth, gone awry.³⁴

Theodore Dreiser, was the writer-humanist who witnessed the animosities of a capitalist system to the development of the human personality and individuality, he searched the ways which would allow the person to develop freely in the reality. Dreiser thought of the ways of the creation of such social conditions which would make impossible the American tragedies. In the period of writing "An American tragedy" Dreiser did not see the possibility of the solution of these acute problems of the development of the society. He wrote: "I have no theories concerning life or any means to resolve economic or political problems".

³⁴ Vincent Fitzpatrick, "H.L. Mencken", Mercer University Press, 2004, p. 60

“An American tragedy” developed and improved those deep humanistic feelings and thoughts by which the previous novels of Dreiser were touched. That is a sensation and grasping of a tragic element of life of a simple American, embodied in the destinies of Gerstwood and Jennie Gerhardt, it is a condemnation of the spirit of the money-making, making pathos of "Trilogy of Desire", and at last, it is a credo of the realistic art, stated in "Genius" calling the writer to represent those aspects of life which owing to their ordinariness, simplicity and dullness were not considered as topics worthy of an artist.

There were realistic landscapes, symbols and comparisons of the writer in the novel. The book began and came to an end with the scene of the twilights. The scene of the death of Roberta on the lake of Big Bittern was deeply symbolical. Their affinity had begun with a meeting on the lake. And then everything reminded him of that walk, - “over the head there was the same fluffy cloudlet, as that which floated over him on that fatal day on the lake Kram”. He was going “to look there for some water lilies to kill the time, before...” - those lilies reminded again that first, casual meeting on the lake Kram when a happy Clyde “picked the flowers with long damp stalks and threw them to her feet”. This detail aggravated a dramatic nature of the situation in which we could find Clyde and Roberta.

Dreiser- novelist paid a steadfast attention to the psychology and a mental state of his hero. With the same scrupulousness which was characteristic for a landscape, portrait and for describing of details, Dreiser transferred and analyzed sincere experiences of Clyde in the expectation of the death penalty. Dreiser had specially visited the prison Sing- Sing in America where he talked with the one who was sentenced to the death penalty.

Dreiser had often used an internal monologue, especially for reproduction of a distraught condition of the spirit of Clyde. The newspaper message pushed Clyde on the thought about the possibility to get rid of Roberta. And his internal monologue transferred all the mess and confusion of the feelings of Clyde who was tired and was stirred up, trying to get out of a precipice to which he was tempted by the thoughts about murder. A Steadfast consideration of the psychology of Clyde was inseparably linked with the disclosure of the social reasons of those shocks which he worried and felt.

A big semantic loading in the novel was carried also by its title, which was not chosen by Dreiser at once. In the first variants, the book carried the name "Mirage" shading illusoriness of the

representations about life inspired to the American people. The theme of the American illusions was most fully transferred in the images of Clyde's parents.

The people similar to the parents of Clyde and Roberta lived in an illusory world far from the reality, they "are born, live and die, without having understood anything in life. They appear, go randomly and disappear in a haze". In this Dreiser saw the essence of Americanism: "the parents Roberta were the classical representatives of that primordial type of the Americanism which denied the facts and honored illusions". The gold mirage ruined Clyde, ruined a human person, but the sense of the novel was wider, - the American society was responsible for the distribution and the maintenance of those pernicious illusions. The final and the definite name – "An American tragedy" - perfectly transferred the pathos of the novel, but was not liked by the publishers who considered that it would not be pleasant to the American public and for the audience of reader's because of its sharpness, and they tried to force Dreiser to take out a surname of the protagonist into the title of the novel, but Dreiser there again had not made a concession.

"An American tragedy" had finished a very important chapter in the history of struggle for a realistic art in the USA, against the restrictions which were demanded by the bourgeois criticism and publishers. Those requirements in the end of the nineteenth century had even been recognized by such a theorist of realism, as an American writer and a literary critic, Mark Twain's friend William Din Howells.

"An American tragedy" became a banner of a critical realism in the American literature of the twentieth century. It had defined a basic path and highway of the further development of the American literature. The blossoming of a critical realism is connected with an occurrence of "An American tragedy" in the USA.

"An American tragedy" was not free from the shortages as well. All the analysis of the novel testified about the transition to the new ideas, which were not yet completely grown in the outlook and in the creativity of the writer. Therefore, we consider that "An American tragedy" was a literary work of that period which was transitive for Dreiser.

It would be incorrect to consider, however, that in "An American tragedy" Dreiser had exposed for the first time the falsity of the illusions about the possibility of the success for a simple American in the capitalist America. Without exposures of that vicious "theory" it was impossible to

be a critical realist, it was impossible to show a little essential, typical parties of the reality of the USA, and Dreiser was a critical realist and, moreover the head of the critical realism in the USA.

But only in “An American tragedy” the writer had shown not only the falsity of this "theory", but also had proved its criminality, had proved that it was intentionally driven into the minds of simple Americans. Naming the book “An American tragedy” and convicting the American monopolists and putridity of their system, Dreiser had displayed not only the crisis of the American capitalism, but also a general crisis of the capitalism, its disintegration and rotting.

There was not a positive hero, fighter and anti-imperialist in “An American tragedy” though there were hints for the creation of such an image. As it was already told, both in the images of Roberta, and Clyde, Dreiser underlined their sneering attitude to the physical work, imparted to them by a bourgeois America. Both Clyde and Roberta are confronted by the workers – the people of a physical work. Dreiser mentioned them casually, as though by the way, but the writer did not leave the doubts to the reader of that these people were far from the interests of the ruling classes and did not aspire to them or did not try to be nearer. It was clear to the reader that only in that environment the influence of a noxious bourgeois ideology of the American imperialism was not extended, that only those people could resist such an influence. It was not casual that Dreiser clarified that Clyde “would hardly choose those workers to be his companions or to be his contemporaries”. The workers condemned Clyde, but not in that way as he was condemned by the court of the capitalist America. They condemned in him the aspiration to become rich and to find the way to the circles of the capitalists. Those workers appeared to be the unique real judges of the American capitalism, and its ideology.

In “An American tragedy” the original panorama of the American life was created. It was an especially true story of what life did with the person and how the person was powerless against it.

Vitality of the traditions of Dreiser, who had opened a new epoch of the American literature, was mentioned by the biggest American writers of the twentieth century. These were the traditions of the realistic art thanks to which such masterpieces of the American literature of the twentieth century like “An American tragedy”, “Farewell to guns”, “The Grapes of wrath” were created. Despite the prohibitions of the reactionary criticism, they continued to live in those literary works of the modern American literature which defended the ideals of a real humanism.

“An American tragedy” remained as an epoch-making mark in the history of the literature of the USA, defining the main direction of its development. The American critics and writers time and again mentioned about the historical reliability of the novel. “Any novelist, except Dreiser, had not sated the works by such knowledge of the American institutes: the mechanism of business, oppressive rhythms of factory, barratry of city politicians...” - one of critics noted. And the known writer R. Warren wrote: “An American tragedy” can be considered as the documentary certificate, both personal, and historical... As the document it possesses a huge force of influence”.³⁵

“An American tragedy” was rightly included into the golden fund of the world literature.

Dreiser witnessed how good material states were created in America. Owners of these states generated a parasitic class: New York four hundreds, slaveholding aristocracy of the South and those who followed them in other states. That class, according to the supervision of Dreiser, was represented by such people who were interested neither in work, nor in the state affairs, intellectual problems; however, idleness and riches, fanfares and luxury demonstration - interested them only at a defiance of destitute workers, and of the interests of the country as a whole. As a result, during the period since 1875 till 1900, that phenomenon had got the character of a national madness which had led to the World War I of 1914-1918, and had reached its highest peak during the financial crash of 1929. Throughout this period a very few people from Americans dreamt to become the scientist, the philosopher or the geologist. The person could devote himself to any work; however, the persevering thought about money would stay in his mind, and the most reliable way which was necessary to get a fast advancement was - to marry a rich girl, instead of being improved in the specialty and to earn by fair means.

So there was hunting for a rich girl. It was an obsession for Americans. The facts of murder of girls by ambitious young men took place at that time. However there were known many cases when people were deprived of lives for the sake of money.

Murders under similar circumstances happened often enough at the time of Dreiser, and he was frequently faced to them being a reporter, and soon, tragedies of such a kind became an everyday occurrence. Since 1895 there did not pass a year that in this or that place of the country took place this sort of crime.

³⁵ Warren Robert Penn, “Homage to Theodore Dreiser”. New York, Random House, 1971, p.29

All it explained, why Dreiser had defined similar crimes as “An American tragedy” and why he entitled his novel so. After the writing of his novel there were some more cases of such kind. Later, reporters from various newspapers addressed to him with a question: whether the subsequent crimes were prompted by the plot of the novel, or whether the novel served as a cause of the murder. But Dreiser saw the reasons of such murders in the life conditions in America which generated that sort of criminal activity.

As it became clear, the dream of Americans went to a cut with the norms of morals, but completely answered the views dominating in the society. Dreiser often asked a question: “was there a murder for the sake of murder?” Anyone would answer that there was not. Dreiser explained it so, that Chester Gillette was guilty of a crime, but the circumstances which he was not strong enough to overcome, - the circumstances, laws, rules and public norms which were awful for him, ruined him at last.

The style of Dreiser was influenced by his journalistic career. Each setting in the novel was full of description and details. Reading a novel we felt in the most passages the mood of reportage, which came from his background of a reporter. However the uniqueness of Dreiser could be explained by his ability to mix and to integrate his fiction writing and article writing abilities. Plots in the novel were very difficult to grasp, but Dreiser gave much attention to the psychological state of his heroes, explaining each of their action and thoughts, both moral and immoral. Stylistic abilities of Dreiser’s writing made each scene to seem as natural. That is why Dreiser is mostly called naturalistic writer. Odd pictures, odd scenes appeared to be inevitable in the novel, as if proving that all the plans should happen and take place. Throughout the novel Dreiser tried to give motivations, explanations and even beliefs of his heroes in detail. Generally the novel is retold from the third person, but in some cases Clyde himself could be read. The period of the events in the novel took place in the early 20th century in Kansas City.

Individuality of the external displays of feelings, individuality of the selective approach of the author to these observable external displays gave rise to an infinite variety of details. There were four kinds of artistic details: graphic, art, characterizing and implicative.

Already at the very beginning of the novel the author used a graphic detail, creating a vision of described events:

“Dusk of a summer night.

And the tall walls of the commercial heart of an American city of perhaps 400,000 inhabitants such walls as in time may linger as a mere fable.

And up the broad street, now comparatively hushed, a little band of six, a man of about fifty, short, stout, with bushy hair protruding from under a round black felt hat, a most unimportant-looking person, who carried a small portable organ such as is customarily used by street preachers³⁶ and singers. And with him a woman perhaps five years his junior, taller, not so broad, but solid of frame and vigorous, very plain in face and dress, and yet not homely, leading with one hand a small boy of seven and in the other carrying a Bible and several hymn books.³⁷ With these three, but walking independently behind, was a girl of fifteen, a boy of twelve and another girl of nine, all following obediently, but not too enthusiastically, in the wake of the others”.³⁸

By the given example the author depicted the atmosphere and the conditions surrounding protagonists, that world in which they lived. Using the given detail, the author allowed the readers to experience those conditions to which the hero was faced every day. Thus, the author described the family of Clyde; his father – the man of fifty years, rather ordinary-looking person; his mother - simply dressed woman with a tired face.

Also, by means of a graphic detail the author gave the description of the appearance of the heroes. So, for example, the author described appearance of Clyde’s father:

“Asa Griffiths, the father, was one of those poorly integrated and correlated organisms, the product of an environment and a religious theory, but with no guiding or mental insight of his own, yet sensitive and therefore highly emotional and without any practical sense whatsoever.³⁹ Indeed it would be hard to make clear just how life appealed to him, or what the true hue of his emotional responses was”.⁴⁰

Appearance of Clyde was also described by means of a graphic detail:

³⁶ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>, <http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830>, http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635a3bc78b5d53b88421206d37_1.html

³⁹ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>, <http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830> http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635a3bc78b5d53b88421206d37_1.html

⁴⁰ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>

“Casual examination of himself in mirrors whenever he found them tended rather to assure him that he was not so bad-looking-a straight, well-cut nose, high white forehead, wavy, glossy, black hair, eyes that were black and rather melancholy at times”⁴¹.

By using a considerable quantity of graphic details, the author made the impression of a physical sense of the perceived objects and created the participation of the reader in the direct perception in order to help the reader.

Using specifying detail, the author gave trustworthy information about the city of Lycurgus where the protagonist of the novel had arrived for the first time to get the work at the factory of his uncle:

“But Central Avenue was quite alive with traffic, pedestrians and automobiles. Opposite diagonally from the hotel, which contained a series of wide plate-glass windows, behind which were many chairs interspersed with palms and pillars, was the dry-goods emporium of Stark and Company, a considerable affair, four stories in height, and of white brick, and at least a hundred feet long, the various windows of which seemed bright and interesting, crowded with as smart models as might be seen anywhere. Also there were other large concerns, a second hotel, various automobile showrooms, a moving picture theater”.⁴²

By using the given specifying detail, the author described the main street of Lycurgus, the Central-avenue. From the given fragment it became clear that the street was lively, with a considerable quantity of pedestrians and cars, and also the author underlined and noted the presence of shops, hotels and cinemas. The reader who had never been in this city could not form any bright association connected with a scene of action. However, the reader would imagine the picture of the movement of the hero - in that case it was shown by a slow walk, by the first acquaintance of the hero with the city where he would live and work.

Also, by means of a specifying detail, the author described one of shops of the factory of collars, giving thus the so-called historical inquiry. Thus, the author explained the reader who had never tested a similar work, how it was difficult to earn money for the workers in the times of writing of the novel, and also, explained, the consistence of the work itself:

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>
<http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830> http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635a3bc78b5d53b88421206d37_1.html

“Here, by the help of four long rows of incandescent lamps, he discerned row after row of porcelain tubs or troughs, lengthwise of the room, and end to end, which reached from one exterior wall to the other. And in these, under steaming hot water apparently, were any quantity of those same webs he had just seen upstairs, soaking. And near-by, north and south of these tubs, and paralleling them for the length of this room, all of a hundred and fifty feet in length, were enormous drying racks or moving skeleton platforms, boxed, top and bottom and sides, with hot steam pipes, between which on rolls, but festooned in such a fashion as to take advantage of these pipes, above, below and on either side, were more of these webs, but unwound and wet and draped as described, yet moving along slowly on these rolls from the east end of the room to the west. This movement, as Clyde could see, was accompanied by an enormous rattle and clatter of ratchet arms which automatically shook and moved these lengths of cloth forward from east to west”⁴³.

Thus, the specifying detail created the reliability, the objectivity of the described events, appealed to the joint experience of the author and the reader.

By means of a characterizing detail, it became obviously possible to track the basic character traits of the protagonist the description of whom was constantly met throughout the whole novel:

“For Clyde was as vain and proud as he was poor. He was one of those interesting individuals who looked upon himself as a thing apart never quite wholly and indissolubly merged with the family of which he was a member, and never with any profound obligations to those who had been responsible for his coming into the world.⁴⁴ And yet, with so much judgment in that direction, he was never quite able at least not until he had reached his sixteenth yea to formulate any policy in regard to himself, and then only in a rather fumbling and tentative way”⁴⁵.

From the given fragment it became clear that, using a characterizing detail, the author underlined such qualities of the hero as vanity, pride, dissimilarity to the others thus focusing attention on that these features had already begun to be seen in his early youth.

⁴³ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>
<http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830>, http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635a3bc78b5d53b88421206d37_1.html

⁴⁴ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>
<http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830>, http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635a3bc78b5d53b88421206d37_1.html

⁴⁵ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>

Also, the author allocated the propensity of Clyde to exaggerate his own position in a society and his superfluous self-confidence which was especially brightly shown after the visit of Clyde to his relatives of the higher society:

“And this, in spite of the present indifference of the Griffiths, caused him to walk with even more of an air than had hitherto characterized him. Even though neither they nor any of those connected with them recognized him, still he looked at himself in his mirror from time to time with an assurance and admiration which before this he had never possessed”⁴⁶.

Despite that fact that Griffiths do not show a particular interest to Clyde and behave indifferently in the relation to him, Clyde was full self-confidence and admiration by himself, considering that the relations with people of such a high position would open to him the doors into the new and happier life.

One more important peculiarity of the character trait noted by the author was the inconstancy of his character and a thoughtless aspiration to riches, beauty, and luxury:

“So much for the effect of wealth, beauty, the peculiar social state to which he most aspired, on a temperament that was as fluid and unstable as water”⁴⁷.

Summarizing all the above mentioned it was necessary to notice that the characterizing detail included the reader into the process of co-authorship and made the impression of non-participation of the author in the final conclusion as the reader would interpret each character trait of the hero in his own way, making his own conclusions.

The author tried to use implicative details, for the description of the condition and of the state of Clyde in the House of Death, in his last haven before the death. Certainly that the author, as well as anybody among the readers could not like and understand completely all the experiences, feelings of the hero waiting his execution. The author could assume only, how the life of such people was, how the perception of their life was and how much their private world changed:

“It was here, the execution! The hour of death was at hand. This was the signal. In their separate cells, many of those who through fear or contrition, or because of innate religious convictions, had been recalled to some form of shielding or comforting faith, were upon their knees

⁴⁶ <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>
<http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830>, http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635a3bc78b5d53b88421206d37_1.html

⁴⁷ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>

praying. Among the rest were others who merely walked or muttered. And still others who screamed from time to time in an incontrollable fever of terror”⁴⁸.

“As for Clyde he was numb and dumb. Almost thoughtless. They were going to kill that man in that other room in there. That chair that chair that he had so greatly feared this long while was in there was so close now. Yet his time as Jephson and his mother had told him was so long and distant as yet if ever ever it was to be if ever ever...”⁴⁹

By the given example the author depicted all those feelings tested by the hero in the expectation of the execution of his cellmate. All it was wild for Clyde, even the thoughts in him had stood, he became dull and dumb. Comprehension of that now, in the next room there would be killed a man, was painful. In his imagination he had brightly imagined an execution room, that electric chair which was his nightmare all lately. But, despite of all, he had a hope that he would probably be justified and he would exonerate himself and he would never see that terrible room with his own eyes.

“The procession had passed. That door was shut. He was in there now. They were strapping him in, no doubt. Asking him what more he had to say he who was no longer quite right in his mind. Now the straps must be fastened on, surely. The cap pulled down. In a moment, a moment, surely.

And then, although Clyde did not know or notice at the moment--a sudden dimming of the lights in this room as well as over the prison an idiotic or thoughtless result of having one electric system to supply the death voltage and the incandescence of this and all other rooms.⁵⁰ And instantly a voice calling:

"There she goes. That's one. Well, it's all over with him."

And a second voice: "Yes, he's topped off, poor devil."

Thereafter silence - a deadly hush with later some murmured prayers here and there. But with Clyde cold and with a kind of shaking ague. He dared not think let alone cry. So that's how it was. They drew the curtains. And then and then. He was gone now. Those three dimmings of the

⁴⁸ Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>
<http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830>

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy",
http://knowledge.allbest.ru/literature/2c0b65635b2bc78a4d53a88421306c36_1.html
<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book3.html> <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>

lights. Sure, those were the flashes. And after all those nights at prayer. Those moanings! Those beatings of his head! And only a minute ago he had been alive walking by there. But now dead. And some day he he! how could he be sure that he would not? How could he?”⁵¹

Just after execution, having seen and having experienced all that terrifying procedure, Clyde had thrown in a shiver. He felt nothing, could neither think, nor cry. Several seconds ago the man was alive, passed in front of him in the corridor; now he was dead. He was not rescued by prayers, by uncountable recalling to God, by anything. Just after this scene Clyde had found out all the inevitability of his position, he would also pass through that corridor, would enter into that door and there would come the silence of the death. Nobody could say that all of it would not happen to him.

We noticed that an implicative detail was used by the author in the individual and concentrated form. By means of this detail we could at least partly get into the inwardness of the hero, understand his fear before an inevitable death, experience all that horror felt by the hero when he became the witness of all the procession of the execution.

Generalizing all aforesaid, it was necessary to notice that the usage of the artistic details by the author was an important indicator of his individual style. Using various details, the author created a certain implied sense so that each detail assumed a wider and deeper coverage of any fact that helped the reader to understand better the concession of the thoughts and the point of view of the author, to catch the basic idea which the author wanted to give to the readers.

§3 A character analysis: Clyde and Clyde's love story

Several things in the novel were quite evident and did not suppose detailed explanations. Dreiser practiced the term modern “tragedy” which differed from the Aristotelian definition of “tragedy”. Dreiser assumed a human being had the forces out of his own control. These were the natural and relative forces. Clyde was born in the slums; he had poor parents and throughout all his life dreamt about wealthy world full of pleasures either mental or physical and confessed that he would never get it all. The world of Clyde became more ambitious and richer because all his actions took place in the novel. The pictures created by Dreiser in the novel, the scenes of luxury made Clyde thirsty of money and wealth. The more he had the more he wanted.

⁵¹Ibid

Clyde was constantly thinking about the other world for himself; he wanted to wear other clothes and to live quite differently. When he was fifteen years old, he understood that he had poor education as well. In order to reach the given standards of the American youth, Clyde did not want to work. He was very proud. At the age of sixteen, Clyde took a job as assistant to a soda - water clerk at Klinkle's Drugstore.⁵² It that age Clyde was very interested in women. The opposite sex attracted him so much. So that his appearance especially his clothes was a big problem for him. He had to accept the fact, which he would not be as sympathetic as he wanted to be, he would not have friends because of the position of his parents. He always dreamt of better clothes; especially better shoes, better shirts with better collars. Some young men of his age had even their own cars with nice girl friends. His parents decided to move to Denver, because Esta, his sister, left them with an actor. Clyde did not want to go with them, decided to stay in Kansas and to find well-paid job. He worked as a bellboy in Kansas Citi Hotel.⁵³ This job gave him a chance to have money, to dress better. Now he could enjoy the life with money in his pockets. Clyde found some friends there whose understandings of better life coincided with that of Clyde. They thought that a better life is meant to be expensive clothes, good meals in the luxurious restaurants, alcohol drinks and of course women. Having money Clyde went to a brothel, where met Hortense Briggs. She was a pretty girl who attracted Clyde. Telling the truth she was not seem to like Clyde very much, but spent her time with Clyde because he treated her well, gave gifts to her, money, said pleasant words. Hortense Briggs asked Clyde to by her a fur jacket and told Clyde that she was ready to sleep with him for money. By that time Clyde's sister Esta came back, being pregnant. Her boy-friend actor left her. She had to live distant from her family, because she felt herself guilty. Her mother Mrs. Griffiths visited her helping with money and food. Sometimes later Clyde and Hortense had an auto-accident. Clyde had to ran away in order not be caught by police. Hortense ran away as well. Clyde's mother asked him to help his sister with money, because she was in a difficult situation, but Clyde did not. He thought only about Hortense. He wanted to have her. Here we saw that Dreiser tried to show Clyde's inner world, which torments him because he didn't give money to his sister. Throughout the novel Clyde is shown as vulnerable and ambitious hero. There were times when he was mentally isolated, from the public for three years, because of the car accident. In that period he lived in St. Lois, Peoria, and Milwaukee. He worked in different places, not well paid as grocery, shoe store, restaurant etc. Then Clyde worked in Union League Hotel where he met his uncle Samuel Griffiths, who offered him a

⁵² Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635b2bd78a4d53a88421206c37_0.html

⁵³ Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>

work at Griffiths Collar and Shirt Company, Inc., in Lycurgus.⁵⁴ Then Clyde had accept this offer and to work at the factory of his uncle. Here he changed his way of earning money. It became more economic. There Clyde also admired his cousin Gilbert, because he was the son of rich father and had everything. Seeing all these Clyde was thinking of a murdering for his own profit and advancement. He was determined to kill for money, for social position, for love. He was determined to sacrifice Roberta Alden, impregnated by him. Clyde torments himself and his environment because of the unexplainable desire of being rich. His act was very cruel. Clyde himself was a victim of a deceitful society with materialistic ideas and values.

When Clyde started, he had no money and respect in a social life. His lifelong attempts were devoted just to these ideas to have a happiness which he could buy and to have a false respect and love and feelings. He earned money and spent it for Hortense who did not deserve it as well as Clyde. Her love and affirmation were purchasable. Clyde did not realize and understand that all his life was devoted to false feelings, everything what he did was useless, terrible, awful, unjust...

The main credo of "An American Tragedy" was the phrase: "Money makes man". Dreiser wanted to prove it or to show that it was a mistake of the materialistic society which was brought up with such a credo. If to appeal to the social criticism of Theodore Dreiser we can realize that the difficult situation of the poor is depended of the actions of the rich.

Actually the case and the problem was not absolutely in the capitalist world corrupting the young man, the reason was probably in his soul where there were not enough and serious moral principles which would lead him to murder. It was necessary to search for the reasons not only in the bourgeois ideals and morals which "had spoilt" lovely Griffiths. The whole way of his moral fading and depravity showed how he logically and gradually went on murder. Being already in prison, Clyde could not understand: "For what?" He was absolutely lost: was it he who killed Roberta? After all he was in passionate love with her unless he was blinded by riches of Sondra.

However, he had never been going to marry a simple working woman like Roberta and when it became inevitable, he had tried to get rid of his mistake. He had unintentionally pushed the girl, from an awkward movement the boat had turned over, Roberta could not dive- and went to the bottom immediately. Clyde could dive excellently, but did not want to save her, and went to the coast. There was the person sinking before his eyes, asking for help... But Clyde floated to his

⁵⁴ http://knowledge.allbest.ru/languages/2c0a65635b2bd78a4d53a88421206c37_0.html
<http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=519473> <http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides4/Dreiser.html>

dream, to "dolce vita", to the entertainments, to Sondra. No, he did not kill Roberta, just simply did not want to save her.

The image of Clyde was created by a scrupulous escalating of details; small details which accumulating, and created an image of a young man. Clyde, from his early youth was tempted with the life, directing shy, but greedy looks atop "high walls", separating a desired, but such an inaccessible world of rich people.

We have learned that Clyde Griffiths- was a young fellow who was grown up poor but believed that someday he would free himself from his family and would enter the higher society. It was awful to him to be born in a poor family. He could not accept that he his siblings asked for donations singing religious songs, helping their parents to do the God's work in Kansas City. Clyde Griffiths, the young man from a poor large family of the street preachers, he was not alien to the feelings of vanity, pride, but he was deprived of formation, practice and energy, having got some - rather doubtful - life experience working the in the Kansas City Hotel. In Lycurgus he got a job at the factory of his rich relative. There he got acquainted with Roberta Alden, the lovely modest girl. Soon the possibility to enter the world of the owners of Lycurgus was represented to him. The daughter of one of the rich men, Sondra Finchley felt sympathy to Clyde. By that time Clyde learned that Roberta waited for the child from him. Clyde had an intention to get rid of her;⁵⁵ he thought over the plan of murder and invited Roberta to boat walk where she died. Clyde was not so cruel or so brave to kill her; the case had helped him in this. The fault for the death of the girl was assigned to him, and he ended his life on an electric chair, such was the end of the person who had believed in a myth of "equal possibilities".

We suppose that the uniqueness of the novel was in that, the role of the tragic hero was given not to Frank Cowperwood ("The Financier"), not to Eugene Witla ("The Genius") but to an ordinary person- Clyde. He was ashamed of his parents because they were "outsiders", and he wanted to be as all the others. He did not put before himself the grandiose purposes. There was nothing extraordinary in his desire and in his aspiration to climb to the highest society. It was indicative that Roberta behaved like that and her actions were directed by the same dream. She gave herself to Clyde because she supposed that marriage with him would be her only happy chance in life. Both of them were the victims of the aspiration to success by which there were captured thousands of their compatriots.

⁵⁵ Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book3.html>

Such a concept as love was the link of the novel which united all the heroes. Dreiser indicated the love for God, the love of Clyde to his parents, girls etc. in the novel. There were considered the various displays of love expressed, accordingly, differently in the novel. Quite often under the word of love, instead of a deep and sincere feeling the author meant only the passion, not realized inclination. In the given paragraph of our thesis we tried to analyze how and with the help of which expressions there were shown the feelings of Clyde Griffiths to the girls.

In the mutual relations of Clyde and Hortense there dominated the only non-realized inclination, passion but not love at all “began to feel and look crushed”⁵⁶. Clyde was bewitched by the beauty of the girl, by her sociability and cheerful nature and, considering the absence of his life experience in such feelings, he inspired himself that he was enamored. Clyde did not understand that behind the sociability of the girl there was hidden her vulgarity and his feelings to her were no more than the first passion in his life. Appetency, affection, passion- by these words Dreiser called the feelings of Clyde to Hortense.

Coming to Roberta Alden, Clyde had a strong affection to her, he considered that he had really fallen in love with her, “I'm crazy about you”⁵⁷, however the author mentioned that his feelings to her were not deep enough, he was confused by her low social status, by the poverty of her family and by the fact that she was just a simple woman-worker at the factory. This fact, again, underlined the value of a social position, of a security and of a high position in a society for Clyde.

Even when Clyde decided to stop all his relations with Roberta, we saw that he was not brave enough to confess everything to her at once. Having learnt about her position in which she had appeared to be, because of his fault in many respects, - she was pregnant, Clyde was absolutely confused, he could not solve that problem and only aggravated the situation with new and false promises, confessions and declarations of love to her “I love you just the same. Truly I do, and I always will”.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book1.html>

⁵⁷ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>
<http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830>

⁵⁸ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book2.html>

In the relations with Sondra Finchley, Clyde was the first who spoke about his love to her, trying to win her attention and trust “I care for you, I love you so much”.⁵⁹

In that case it was possible to consider that Clyde was involved and attracted more by a social status of the girl, by her relevance to the upper class of the society, by her material well-being, rather than by her personality. The love in that case played a secondary role. As it was already mentioned earlier, Clyde tried to occupy a higher position in the society, and the marriage with such a notable girl would promote it in many respects. After the several time Clyde had even managed to convince Sondra in his feelings, and they decided to run away, but their plans could not come true.

But nevertheless, after the reading of the novel it became clear that love was much less important than money and a social status for Clyde Griffiths. Dreiser showed us that actually Clyde had not really loved Hortense Briggs, either Roberta Alden, or Sondra Finchley. Hortense was almost his affection of youth, his first love experience. Clyde liked Roberta Alden, he had even thought that he loved her, but actually, she was only his next affinity which had gone too far and led to the serious consequences. Coming to Sondra Finchley, she was just a successful possibility for Clyde to show himself in the highest society and to get the material welfare which he wished so.

Chapter III: The crash of “An American dream” in the novel of “An American Tragedy”

§1 The notion of “money” and “prosperity” in the novel “An American Tragedy”

One of the key concepts of the novel was the concept of money. It was one of the most often used notions throughout the whole novel. Each of the heroes had his own the relation to money, and own way of the achievement of a well-being. Within the limits of our thesis it was not obviously possible to analyze the position of all the heroes to money, therefore we tried to survey the relation of the protagonist, Clyde Griffiths, who had most fully characterized the point of view of the author and allowed us to reveal an image of the author.

⁵⁹ Ibid

From the very beginning of his life Clyde witnessed the social and economic crisis and suffered from it. He was always confused and embarrassed of the poor material state of his parents. That was the reason why he left his family in order to achieve the highest position in the society. He was ashamed by the poverty of his family and hated it. Whatever happened he wanted to execute all his wishes and dreams of better life. He tried to show his parents more respectable and important telling lie about their profession or their working place. He began to work from the early age of fifteen. Clyde was eager to earn his first salary as soon as possible.

Clyde worked in different positions beginning from malt shop, grocery, and shoe-store, restaurant, worked as a bellboy in Kansas Citi Hotel, in Union League Hotel etc. His last destination was the factory of collars and shirts of his uncle Samuel Griffiths in Lyncurgus. Clyde earned enough money, visited the various places of entertainment, drank expensive alcohol drinks as whisky, made false friends and got acquainted with vulgar girl from brothel. All these facts broke Clyde's devotion to his family. He was apart from them, but he had money in his pockets and it was enough.

Clyde was very happy getting this job and being in this position. This could be a chance for him, because the close connections with such a man like Samuel Griffiths promised respect and social acceptance in the city. Then there came Clyde's acquaintances with women- Roberta Alden and Sondra Finchley. Roberta Alden – "a factory-girl" meant for the end of his wish without money, Sondra Finchley- the daughter of a rich father was a guarantee of a luxurious life for Clyde. He invested all his money to Sondra, answering to all her caprices because he was sure that marriage with her was the clue to happiness, was a chance to get material welfare and to become rich at last. When Sondra started to have serious relations with, Clyde was in paradise having a chance to flirt with her. At a dinner dance sponsored by the local dwellers, "...she slipped a white arm under Clyde's, and he felt as though he was slowly but surely being transported to paradise".⁶⁰

Clyde's sins started to appear in the novel when his mother told him to give twenty five dollars to his sister because she was in a difficult situation being impregnated by the actor, who left her. This passage showed us that Clyde could even lie and pretend as if he had no money. In that case Clyde spent all his money to Hortense because she promised to be with him if he would buy an expensive fur jacket for her. We saw that Hortense was of more importance to him, that was where his devotion to his family had been broken.

⁶⁰ Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book2.html>

He was so eager to gain wealth, high social status, luxurious life and general respect that he could not realize that he had broken all the moral principles of life. Money made him! And finally he had lost everything! He could not become rich; he had lost his freedom, his family, and his love and even his life. All his thoughts, all his desires and beliefs were crashed. He could not realize it all, because all his attempts, all his actions, behaviors, plans were incorrect. He had forgotten about moral principles and that was his fiasco.

Desperate aspiration of the protagonist to money, to welfare and to all those possibilities which were opened before rich men was clearly seen from the first lines of the novel. We will cite a fragment from the text:

“Before he had ever earned any money at all, he had always told himself that if only he had a better collar, a nicer shirt, finer shoes, a good suit, a swell overcoat like some boys had!⁶¹ Oh, the fine clothes, the handsome homes, the watches, rings, pins that some boys sported; the dandies many youths of his years already were! Some parents of boys of his years actually gave them cars of their own to ride in. They were to be seen upon the principal streets of Kansas City flitting to and fro like flies. And pretty girls with them. And he had nothing. And he never had had”.⁶²

From the given fragment we saw that Clyde was grown up in a poor family where they lived from hand to mouth, at he had never had good clothes “if only he had a better collar, a nicer shirt, finer shoes, a good suit, a swell overcoat”⁶³ and all that which was necessary and inherent to rich people “the handsome homes, the watches, rings, pins that some boys sported”.⁶⁴ It was very important for him to get rid of this poverty, to find welfare in order to help his family and to join a society of well-founded young men.

But consequently, when Clyde started to earn independently, there were revealed his unwillingness to render a material aid to his parents, his aspiration to spend all earned money only to himself. This fact portrayed such a characteristic traits, as egoism, and also a total absence of the hero's life experience. His mind was eclipsed by the thoughts about the possibilities which would be opened before him by means of the earned money, he was tempted by it, and he was pined for desire to look no worse than the other well-dressed young men:

⁶¹ <http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=665830>

⁶² Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>,
<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book3.html>

⁶³ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book2.html>

⁶⁴ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book2.html>

Also, by means of money Clyde tried to have a pleasant girl, making her believe that he was more well-founded and was ready to spend much money for her. Clyde realized that it was not enough to be handsome in order to be liked by girls but also it was necessary to give them gifts and to spend the considerable sums for them. He also tried to win the attention of the girl liked by him on the following example:

"Well, I'll tell you one thing," he blurted boastfully and passionately. "I could spend a lot more on you than they could. I got it." He had been thinking only the moment before of fifty-five dollars in bills that snuggled comfortably in his pocket".⁶⁵

Moreover, his assumption about that in order to strengthen the position in the society it was not enough to possess a pleasant appearance but it was also necessary to be rich, was supported, by one of the members of society who directly told him about it:

"But don't you think you're better looking than your cousin," she went on sharply and even commandingly. "Some people think you are."

"Why, I don't think anything of the kind," he laughed. "Honest, I don't. Of course I don't."

"Oh, well, then maybe you don't, but you are just the same. But that won't help you much either, unless you have money that is, if you want to run with people who have." She looked up at him and added quite blandly. "People like money even more than they do looks."⁶⁶

Thus, we had clarified that money for the protagonist was the sense of all his life, the unique means of the achievement of success in decent society: "money for clothes", "money for beautiful homes", "money for cars". The author focused our attention on that the aspiration to have money and to live in a beautiful life had closed all the other feelings and human qualities of the hero. Even choosing between the two nice girls he liked, Clyde had chosen Sondra Finchley, the girl from the society with a high material well-being. On an example of the protagonist of the novel, the author gave the readers the reason to think over all. On an example of Clyde Griffiths the author showed a negative influence of money on a simple man of the middle class. The hero, blinded by the shine of a beautiful life, did not wish to achieve a recognition in the society independently, to earn money with his own labor, climbing thereby on the social ladders by receiving a social recognition, he wanted to get everything at once, and such a behavior did not receive the approval of the author. As

⁶⁵Theodore Dreiser, "An American Tragedy", <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>

⁶⁶ <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book2.html>

the author showed, the very aspiration to have money and to have a beautiful life, led the hero to such a tragic ending.

§2 Interrelation of crime & punishment as depictive features of the novel

The culmination moment in the novel was the crime made by Clyde in the relation to Roberta. The thought of murder came to Clyde's mind casually. Having read in the newspaper about the murder which had occurred on one of the lakes, he imagined himself in a similar situation. It was extremely necessary for him to dispose of Roberta as soon as possible because she hindered him in his mutual relations with Sondra, and represented a direct threat to his future, which was seen to him very light and happy. For the first time, Clyde drove away the similar thoughts, supposing that he was not able of murder, trying to find the other way to dispose of Roberta:

“Oh, dreadful thought! To think it should have come to him! And at this time of all times when she was demanding that he go away with her!”⁶⁷

Death!

Murder!

The murder of Roberta!”⁶⁸

Clyde could not assume that the crime committed by him would be solved and that his fault would be proved, and that this act would be decisive in his life. The relation to the act made by Clyde was identical to the relation of the inhabitants of Big Moose Lake where the same murder took place.

The fault of Clyde had been completely proved, the condemnation was severe: the death penalty through an electric chair. Trying to provide himself a bright and happy future with Sondra, by the death Roberta, the girl who loved him, Clyde directed and led his life to such a tragic ending.

We suppose that such a death of Clyde was unjust. The given judgment was so terrible and awful that it was very difficult to read the novel till the end. We consider that an ordinary citizen of America or even an ordinary reader of any nation had the same feelings, since the verdict given in the book to a young man, who dreamt of a better life, could be given to the whole society as well.

⁶⁷ Theodore Dreiser, “An American Tragedy”, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200421.txt>,
<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dreiser/theodore/american/book2.html>

⁶⁸ Ibid

The protagonist was grown up in such a family, in such a society which demanded from him to behave like that, even if their role was secondary in the novel. The case of Clyde and Roberta or the case of Chester Gillette and Grace Brown and so many other cases were the collapse of The American Dream. It would be more humanistic to sentence him to life imprisonment, because the murder was not committed directly by him. It was an accident, but Clyde being an excellent swimmer did not help Roberta, who could not swim at all. The jury, who gave that verdict to Clyde, was the twelve men, fellow-countrymen of Roberta Alden and their decision could not be fair. However, it was profitable for Mason and Burleigh- those two, who investigated a criminal case, and electrocution of Clyde would be a good promotion to Mason in the upcoming elections. The public opinion which was quite negative decided and ended the life of Clyde Griffiths very tragically. Clyde Griffiths died but had not even realized his own guilt, he was not sure crime and that was the end of his fantasy.

Finally, making some generalizations, it was possible to come to a conclusion that on an example of the protagonist the author showed a negative influence of money to a man. Money could replace so many things to a man; could even replace true feelings and true love. All these had inevitably led to the tragic ending, reflecting the original American tragedy which Dreiser tried to explain to his readers. The society, the people, the events in the novel reflected the problems which would continue to exist even nowadays. Rich people would solve their problems with the help of their money and good social connections while poor people would suffer from the injustice of the world. The book portrayed how the obsessive idea of becoming rich could destroy a human soul.

People, stop feeding yourselves that money, society, luxury and a social status can make you happy! Otherwise, you will be disappointed. There is always something more and better ...

Conclusion

In the given thesis work there were surveyed a creative activity of one of the great representatives of the American literature of the beginning of the XX century, of Theodore Dreiser and his famous novel “An American tragedy”. There were investigated and analyzed the content and structure of his masterpiece work “An American tragedy” and the character of the protagonist Clyde Griffiths.

The creativity of Dreiser is considered to be both a higher launch and a rapid decline of a classical social novel on the American ground. Dreiser cleared the way for the new literary generations, which replaced him from the center to the periphery of the literary reality during his lifetime.

Theodore Dreiser had represented the crash of “An American Dream” in the novel “An American tragedy”. The dream had turned to be an illusion; the original humanity had appeared to be incompatible with bourgeois standards of happiness. America, which had deceived the hero of the novel, sent him on an electric chair though he had consistently executed the official formula of success.

The creativity of Dreiser had affected the American literature of the XX century. His novels in which he had mentioned and portrayed the whole layers of the American life, were not just ordinary literary works- they were considered to be the investigation of the whole American society. And like the works of the greatest writers which allowed the readers to understand the whole epoch, on the basis of the books of Dreiser the future generation makes a full enough representation of America of the end of the XIX century. The influence of Dreiser was deeper and more significant than the influence of many literary innovators just because he touched the fundamental problems of the society. “An American tragedy” revealed a new creative method for the USA as social realism.

It is impossible to imagine the formation of a critical realism in the USA without the works of Dreiser. He played an outstanding role in the development of the advanced aesthetic thought in the USA. Dreiser brought a big contribution to the development of the American literature and supported many writers. He helped to such great writers as Sherwood Anderson and Edgar Li Masters. Dreiser was the great writer and the great publicist, the outstanding public figure. The name of Dreiser was known all over the world. His books were read in France and in England, in Paris and Czechoslovakia and in other countries. Books of Dreiser inspired a deep respect for the labor of American people and their culture.

Creative traditions of Theodore Dreiser - the traditions of realism, of a nationality and of humanism - live in the best works of the American literature of the XX century.

The American literature had changed after Theodore Dreiser. His novel “An American Tragedy” had accurately proved that only the world of exploited people had the original humanistic qualities. Thanks to his honesty and realism, T. Dreiser is considered to be one of the outstanding American writers!

In the given thesis it was clarified that the novel “An American tragedy” corresponded to all the criteria inherent to a real tragedy and revealed both a personal tragedy of the protagonist Clyde Griffiths and the tragedy of the whole society of that period of time.

The analysis of the semantic dominants showed the basic vital values of the protagonist. These values represented neither love nor high human relations but the money which would open the ways to a beautiful life and a high position in the society, eagerly desired by the hero.

The artistic details which were widely presented in the novel, made it possible to get deeply into the atmosphere of that times. With help of these artistic details we could imagine the portrait of the protagonist, the main features of his character, those places in which he lived and worked. The author also gave the chance to the readers to penetrate into the feelings and the experiences of the hero and to understand his thoughts. It was clarified that the most frequent in the novel there were the specifying and characterizing details which were depicted brightly and accurately in order to show the surrounding conditions of the hero, and the hero himself as a typical example of his time.

All those means allowed us to reveal the image of the author in the given novel. Dreiser, as the witness of events, did not condemn and judge the protagonist, considering that he was just one the products of his time and he could not behave differently. The main hero Clyde Griffiths was not the only one, guilty of a crime; there were also the circumstances which he could not overcome. Realizing it all, Dreiser wanted to explain to his the readers a true American tragedy, he wanted show how the result of vanity and aspiration to a more beautiful live could be, if there were not applied any efforts to reach it.

Dreiser described the significance of the role of the money in the lives of people, revealed how a false understanding of the reality could poison the mind of the non-experienced man and depicted the human relations which had a different social status.

The theme of money occupied the main place in the novel "An American tragedy". Money defined the destinies of the heroes. The worship to a dollar cult had led to the tragic death of the heroes of the novel, the two young men - Roberta Alden and Clyde Griffiths.

The novel "An American tragedy" was a peak point in the creativity of Theodore Dreiser. There were more profoundly embodied, the talent of the artist, of the humanist who laid the new ways both in literature, and in life.

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